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Printed for the use of the Foreign Office. April 1899.

CONFIDENTIAL.

(6959.)

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FURTHER CORRESPONDENCE

RESPECTING

ASIATIC TURKEY.

[In continuation of Confidential Paper No. 6958.]

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CONFIDENTIAL.

(6959.)

Further Correspondence respecting Asiatic Turkey.

[In continuation of Confidential Paper No. 6958.]

No. 1.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received July* 1.)

(No. 434.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, July* 1, 1897, 10·15 A.M.

HER Majesty's Consul at Jeddah telegraphs as follows :—

"The interruption of communications has infuriated the camel-drivers, and yesterday a British Indian retail-trader and a shepherd were murdered within a mile of Jeddah, while cases of robbery and cattle-lifting abound.

"Some money belonging to the Grand Shereef was seized and a sailing-vessel has been plundered on the coast."

No. 2.

The Marquess of Salisbury to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 165.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, July* 3, 1897.

I HAVE received your Excellency's despatch No. 416 of the 24th ultimo, stating that the Vali of Mosul had objected to the dismissal of the Mudir of Barwarah, that the matter had been referred to the Council of State, and that, in consequence of your representations, definite orders had been sent for the dismissal of the Mudir.

I have to express to your Excellency my satisfaction at the successful result of your action.

I am, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 3.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received July* 6.)

(No 422.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, June* 28, 1897.

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith, copy of a despatch, which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Kharput, reporting on the situation at Chemish-Ghesek, Aghin, Eghin, and Arabkir.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 3.

Vice-Consul Fontana to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 27.)
Sir, *Kharput, June* 7, 1897.

I HAVE the honour to submit the following Report upon the situation at Chemish-Ghesek, Arabkir, in the Aghin villages, and at Eghin, all of which places I visited upon my journey to and from the latter town.

The general condition of Chemish-Ghesek is at present satisfactory. The Major acting as Kaïmakam, who left for Khozat the day after my departure for Aghin, seems to have merited and acquired the respect and gratitude of the Armenians for the firmness and humanity displayed by him during his tenure of office. His successor, however, to the post of Deputy Kaïmakam, a Circassian named Hassan Bey, who holds the title of Mudir of Aghin, is even more distinguished for his courage, rectitude, and determination to combat injustice and outrage by every means in his power. Kyamil Bey, the most influential Turk at Chemish-Ghesek, has also earned the thanks of the local Christians through the zeal he has invariably shown for their protection. After the Eghin massacre and at the moment when the Kurds were threatening a descent upon the former town, and had already attacked certain of the outlying villages, Kyamil Bey went himself to Samoussa, accompanied by six of his servants and two zaptiehs only, and succeeded in driving off the Kurds; and it was largely due to his personal influence that no movement against the Armenians was started at the time among the Moslem population of Chemish-Ghesek itself. The Kurds looted, out of spite, a farm belonging to Kyamil Bey, situated some distance from the town, drove off his cows and oxen, and cleared out a large and well-replenished granary of which he was the owner. The loss he thus sustained is estimated at about £ T. 300.

The Zabita-Memourou at Chemish-Ghesek appears to have done excellent and untiring service ever since the commencement of the disturbances in Asia Minor. The Armenian notables assured me that this man with the forty zaptiehs under him had worked, so to say, day and night to prevent trouble in the town, or aggression on the part of the tribes, that he was always ready at any hour to start off for any village threatened by the Kurds, and that to him in person were largely due the thanks of the local Christians for their preservation. I had the pleasure of a conversation with the Zabita-Memourou, whom I warmly congratulated upon the success he had met with in the admirable discharge of his duty.

The villages in the neighbourhood of Chemish-Ghesek which suffered most severely were:—

Miadun, completely destroyed.
Mornai, completely destroyed.
Pasapun, completely destroyed.
Bedretil, few houses left.

The trees in these villages were cut down and carried off and the gardens ravaged by the tribes. The Armenian inhabitants fled *en masse* and took refuge in Chemish-Ghesek, where they still remain, with the exception of a few families, who have returned, I am told, to Bedretil. These villagers thus deprived of a means of livelihood are a serious burden to the Armenian townsfolk. Four houses which were rebuilt at Mornai with relief funds were again destroyed by the Kurds, who said that they hoped more houses might be rebuilt in order that they might again have the pleasure of pulling them down. It is most desirable in the interests of the town itself that sufficient protection should be afforded the villages to enable the people, who are now mostly without employment, to return and rebuild their houses, and till the lands belonging to them now lying waste. To this end a body of troops might be detached from the battalion at present stationed at Chemish-Ghesek, as 100 men in all would probably suffice to protect the four villages in question. Their stay there would require, however, to be a prolonged one. Until some such protection is assured it is hopeless for the Relief Committee to attempt to persuade the villagers to return to their lands or rebuild their houses. Should your Excellency approve, I will press my suggestion upon the consideration of the Commandant here.

I consulted Kyamil Bey's opinion upon the subject in point. He replied that the surest means of restoring the tranquillity of the district would be to punish the leaders of the four following tribes, which are the worst, he said, in that part of the Dersim:—

Hoja Ushaghi.
Ressik Ushaghi.
Cholik Ushaghi.
Sham Ushaghi.

He then went on to say that about six years ago a tabour of troops, under the command of a Mir-Alai, was sent to attack the Hoja, Ressik, and Cholik Ushaghi. The Kurds, however, mustered in force and routed the troops, of whom they slew 150, together with their Colonel. The moment for the attack had, it seems, been badly

chosen. But it would be easy, Kyamil Bey premised, to surround one by one in the early spring the villages inhabited in winter by these tribes, before the melting of the snows enabled them to disperse to the hills.

As an agreeable contrast to the lawlessness of the four tribes referred to may be cited the chivalrous behaviour of the Feradan Ashireti, under the Chieftain Suleiman Aga, during the height of the disturbances in the six Armenian provinces. The Ashiret, to the number of 800 men, entered the Armenian quarter of Uch Bey Mahallé—the most exposed in Chemish-Ghesek—and remained there peacefully until all immediate danger to the Christians had passed. A month later Suleiman Aga and his clan cut off by a forced march a notorious Dersim tribe who were hurrying to plunder the town. When Suleiman Aga died some little time ago certain Armenian Notables went as mourners to his funeral. At the conclusion of the ceremony the dead man's son swore over the grave to follow in his father's footsteps, and the tribe swore after him.

The Chieftain of the Kurdish Ashiret appears to be their absolute Ruler, and to sway them for good or evil as the inclination may seize him. His authority resembles, in fact, that wielded by the Head of a Scottish clan in the Middle Ages.

The site of Chemish-Ghesek is similar in some degree to that of Eghin. The following plan may serve to illustrate the natural advantages it possesses from a strategical point of view.*

The town is washed on two sides of the triangle by the river, flanked at the points C by steep cliffs and backed to the left by the lofty mountains of the Dersim. On the side A—the only one accessible to a force of any numbers—stony broken ground dotted with trees slopes up to the town, which might easily be barricaded on the side in question. The main road leading to the town terminates at D, where a bridge crosses the stream.

Chemish-Ghesek might probably be held against far more determined foes (lacking artillery) than the Kurds by a very small force of troops. Any danger which may hereafter menace the Christians of the town will arise primarily from the attitude of its Moslem citizens.

The Aghin villages, numbering in all fifty-four, are divided into three groups under three separate Mudirs. The first group, of which Aghin is the centre, comprises eighteen villages, the Turkish element being throughout the strongest. The second group, the Mudir of which resides at Ancherti, embraces twenty-four villages, almost exclusively Armenian. The third group of twelve villages, the principal being Sarajik, are entirely Kurdish.

The Turkish and Armenian villages, several of which I passed through, are situated in hilly fertile country amidst wood and picturesque scenery. The houses are roomy and well built. I may mention, as an instance of the former prosperity of the Armenian villagers, that at Ancherti, where I passed the night, I slept in a long airy room, lighted by windows in the Gothic style, and decked with a carved ceiling in stained wood that might excite admiration even in Europe. The district is noted for the fruit grown there, grapes, apples, pears, and pomegranates selling for 20 paras the oke. Means of communication, however, with other parts are so restricted as to render any external trade in fruit almost impossible.

The loss of life throughout these villages during the disturbances was comparatively insignificant, and the number of houses burned there unimportant. At Aghin three Christians were killed, and at Vahshen, where by far the greatest number of casualties occurred, thirty-two Armenians in all were murdered. The murderer in chief was Hadji Muhammed "the Conqueror," referred to in my despatch to your Excellency No. 58 of the 18th November, 1896. Armenian houses appear, however, to have been everywhere looted by the Kurds and the Moslem peasantry. The Mudir of Aghin (now Acting Kaïmakam of Chemish-Ghesek) gave proof of real heroism in his attempted protection of the villages under his control. He rode round them when the country-side was swarming with Kurds, accompanied by only two zaptiehs, drove the plunderers from Samouga, where five houses were already blazing; faced a tribe of Kurds with three men behind him and, although fired upon, stood his ground. He faced death, in short, in addition to the sneers of Hadji Muhammed and his like, in brave and not unsuccessful efforts to save the lives and property of a people then in ill-odour with the Central Government.

I had the honour of an interview with Hassan Bey a few hours before his departure for Chemish-Ghesek. I tendered him my sincerest congratulations and best

* Not printed.

wishes for a brilliant future career. He replied in the most courteous manner, but regretfully expressed his doubt as to the prospects of the district he was leaving until some of the rustic miscreants of the type of Hadji Muhammed had been hung.

Chosen by the unanimous voice of twenty-eight hamlets the Mudir of Ancherti, Osman Aga, accompanied by his Armenian Mouavin, called upon me in that village. He dwelt so eloquently upon his own merits that I had but little opportunity to offer any remark. After he had left, a few Armenian notables arrived and confirmed Osman Aga's statements with regard to himself. Upon their departure a number of other Armenians called and informed me that of all wicked men Osman Aga was the worst, and that whenever widows or orphans met him in the street they ran away weeping. A Moslem acquaintance, whose opinion I value, and who knows the Mudir, summed up the latter's character thus: "He is not exactly bad, but his father became rich and so he became a fool."

The chief cause for complaint by the Christians in the Aghin Nahiés seems to lie in the depredations committed by local Turks upon the gardens and vineyards belonging to the former. The petty feuds existing between the local Agas render improvement in this direction at present problematic. If one Aga favours the Christians his rival inevitably tries his best to torment them. But the nomination of a strong, honest, and sensible Mudir to Aghin, who could make his influence felt among the Agas, and to whom the Mudirs of Ancherti and Sarajik should be subordinate, might within a reasonable time, and aided by a few zaptiehs in each village succeed in putting an end to the abuse in question. The only zaptiehs now in the district, as far as I could learn, are to the number of three, and those three at Aghin. Among the candidates for the post of Mudir of Aghin figured Hadji Muhammed, "the Conqueror," who was struck off the list, at my suggestion, by the Kaïmakam of Eghin.

At Arabkir I found rebuilding proceeding rapidly and well. As my stay in that town only lasted one day, it was impossible for me to learn much of interest in connection with the disturbance of 1895, or the character of the functionaries now in office there. The Kaïmakam is an intelligent man but unscrupulous, it appears, and the chief complaint among the Armenians was that the taxes were collected with the greatest indiscrimination and severity. They were enthusiastic, however, in their appreciation of the Colonel now in command of the local garrison.

The condition of the Eghin Christians is most deplorable. Deprived of husband, father, and breadwinner some 600 families are now subsisting upon relief and are crowded into the 300 houses remaining unburned, few among the proprietors of which succeeded, during the massacre, in concealing sufficient wealth to support existence. I visited many of these houses, and the conclusion forced upon me was:

1. That either decent accommodation elsewhere and the means of gaining a livelihood must be found for the inmates.

2. Or that the departure of as many families as possess relations willing to provide for them in other Turkish towns must be facilitated by the free issue of passports without any question of payment of arrears of taxes claimed from the ruined widows and orphans of murdered Armenians whose property has passed into the hands of the rascally local officials.

As your Excellency is aware, Eghin was practically the creation of rich Armenian merchants, who, after accumulating wealth at Constantinople and other important towns, retired to their native place to enjoy the fruit of their toil. There has never existed any trade or manufacture there such as enriched the Armenians of Arabkir, Kharput, and other towns in this vilayet, and even were such manufacture—that of cotton-thread—introduced, the want of space for weaving, of male labour and of facility of transport would combine to render competition with other localities almost hopeless.

Were, therefore, accommodation such as I found in the neighbouring villages of Genergat and Ghorushla (the latter of which was protected by the Director of the Eghin Post Office, Hussein Effendi, who resides there) provided for the destitute Armenian families, they would still continue to depend upon charity for their bread. I may mention that petitions are constantly received by the Kaïmakam, Rifaat Effendi, from Armenians imploring a shelter. He does his best for the unhappy people, and has already since his arrival gained their confidence and esteem. Rifaat Effendi agrees with me that the free departure of families of Armenian women and children possessing relatives elsewhere would be the simplest and most reasonable solution of the question of providing them with food and dwelling.

The Mir-Alai has been of great service in suppressing outrages upon women, which have now entirely ceased at Eghin.

Before concluding this despatch, I would strongly urge the claim of the Zabita-Memouron of Chemish-Ghesek to promotion to the rank of Yuz-Bashi; the appointment to a Kaïmakamlik of Hassan Bey, the Acting Kaïmakam of Chemish-Ghesek; and that some written acknowledgment of their services should be made by the Government to Kyamil Bey, of the said town, and to Hussein Effendi, of Eghin. The Turkish Government, who appear so unwilling to mete out punishment to Moslem criminals, might at least perceive the advisability of rewarding such few Mussulmans as have distinguished themselves by their protection of the lives and property of Christian tax-payers. It is calculated that the yearly loss which will accrue to the Imperial Government from the massacre at Eghin alone will exceed 3,000 Turkish liras.

My thanks are due to the Vali and the authorities of the towns I visited on my journey for the courtesy with which I was everywhere treated.

I have, &c.
(Signed) RAPHAEL A. FONTANA.

No. 4.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received July 6.)

(No. 426.)
My Lord, *Therapia, June 30, 1897.*

THE interesting report by Mr. F. E. Crow on the state of the country between Erzeroum and Bitlis, a copy of which I had the honour to transmit to your Lordship in my despatch No. 397 of the 12th instant, draws attention to the increasing depredations committed upon defenceless villages by the Kurds, and to the impotence of even well-disposed Governors in dealing with the evil.

Reports from other Kurdish districts confirm his account, and show that throughout the eastern vilayets of Asia Minor the Armenian population is more or less at the mercy of these marauders, who ransack their dwellings at will and carry off everything which the rapacity of the tax-gatherer has spared. In towns like Bitlis and Van the immediate presence of the Vali secures some immunity from these attacks, and it is satisfactory to note that the Consular Reports speak well of the efforts made by both Governors to preserve the peace.

Mr. Crow informs me that Omer Bey, Vali of Bitlis, is giving general satisfaction to the Armenians in the neighbourhood, and has cultivated friendly relations with them; but he is much in dread of the Kurds, fears an attempt on his life, and admits his inability to take any effective measures under the present system, which fails to provide either the money or the force, by which alone the turbulent population of the vilayet can be kept in restraint.

Hussein Pasha, Chief of the Haideranli Kurds, is a specimen of the local Sheikh who sets the civil authority at defiance, encourages pillage, and relies on the support of the high military authorities to protect him against repression by the civil arm. Sheikh Sadik is his counterpart in the Van district.

There can be no doubt that these Chieftains have a champion in Zekki Pasha, the Military Commandant at Erzingian, and that there is a complete want of co-operation between him and the civil authority. But it would be difficult, even if desirable, to obtain the removal of a General so strongly supported by the Palace, and Tewfik Pasha, whose attention was called to these matters by Mr. Block at my request, is perhaps right in thinking that the Kurds can only be kept in hand by a strong Military Commander who enjoys their confidence, and that it would be dangerous to put a less influential person in his place.

The task of the Vali is rendered still more difficult by the action of the revolutionary Armenians, who seek every means of producing a conflict in the hope of provoking foreign intervention, but the Acting Vali of Van has explained to an assembly of Kurdish Chiefs summoned by him for the purpose that these armed Armenians are not to be confounded with the peaceful cultivators of the soil, and that, if the latter are further molested, the Kurds will have to reckon with him. This firm attitude of the Vali has naturally made him the enemy of the disturbers of order. I am endeavouring to give him here what support I can, and to urge upon the Porte

the necessity of encouraging the efforts of the well-meaning Valis, and of appointing more efficient officials in the worst-governed districts.

Meanwhile, the proportional representation of Christians in the police and gendarmerie, which forms a part of the scheme of reforms drawn up in 1895, has been only partially carried out, and I regret to say that, in so far as it is in force, the results obtained are far from encouraging. I am preparing for your Lordship a report on this subject, based on the information which I have called for from the Consuls.

Generally speaking the gendarmerie find their interest in making common cause with the Kurds, and, with their pay many months in arrear, many of them can only live by quartering themselves upon the villages, and extorting what they need for a livelihood.

Where, as at Modeki, in the Bitlis region, they come in conflict with the Kurds, they seem powerless to inflict punishment.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

No. 5.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received July 6.*)

(No. 420.)
My Lord, *Therapia, July 1, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Kharput respecting the seizure and detention by Mussulmans of lands belonging to Armenians at Ilidg.

In view of the satisfactory assurances given by the Kaïmakam of Eghin on the subject, I have not thought it necessary to bring the matter to the notice of the Porte, but I have instructed Mr. Fontana to keep a watch on these lands, and to report to me whether the Kaïmakam executes the promises he has made.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 5.

Vice-Consul Fontana to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 30.)
Sir, *Kharput, June 15, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour herewith to transmit to your Excellency a list (obtained from an Armenian source), with translation, of lands belonging to Christians at Ilidg, a village comprising 135 houses, and distant some six hours from Eghin, which are alleged to have been forcibly seized by Mussulmans there since the outbreak of disturbances in the Armenian provinces of Asiatic Turkey.

The ninety Armenian houses at Ilidg were all plundered more or less thoroughly during the months of October-November 1895, and forty of them were burned. Two Armenian peasants were murdered by the pillagers.

Upon the day following the Eghin massacre, in September 1896, and very shortly after the visit and in spite of the assurances of Cara Bey, head of the municipality in that town (*vide* my despatch No. 24 of the 19th ultimo), the Christian section of the village was again looted, and twenty-four Armenians were massacred, in addition to five others who had arrived a few days before from Eghin.

In the course of the disturbances at Ilidg the Moslems there abducted many Armenian women and girls, all of whom, however—with the exception of one who has changed her faith—have since been restored to their friends. Two oxen given by the Red Cross Delegates to Nigoos Michaëlian and Serkis Boyajian were soon afterwards stolen by the village tyrant, Kuturaji Oglou Ahmet, whose removal from Ilidg is indispensable to its absolute tranquillity. Three oxen consigned by Varhan Calhetian to the supposed safe-keeping of Kontig Oglou Eumer were retained by that person, who appears to ape the man Ahmet in infamy and greed.

The forty-four tracts of land seized by Mussulmans at Ilidg represent more than one-half the entire landed property held by the Christian villagers.

Hearing that a copy of the inclosed list had been submitted to the Kaïmakam of Eghin, I approached Rifaat Effendi on the subject, and asked him what he proposed to do.

He replied that the Armenians lacking, in many instances, the wherewithal to plough and sow their fields, had instrusted them to various Moslems upon condition that the ensuing harvest should be equally divided between proprietor and cultivator, that he was consequently unwilling to take any drastic measures to secure the instant return of the lands in question to their lawful owners, but that he intended to use every means in his power to obtain the fair division of this year's crops and the subsequent relapse of the land into the hands of the Christians.

The Kaïmakam further informed me that he had already effected the recovery of three out of the five oxen referred to as belonging to Armenians but remaining in the possession of Turks, and that the other two would also before long be restored to their original owners.

Rifaat Effendi's statement with regard to the consignment of land upon condition of dividing the produce is most probably correct. Such agreements, whether forced or otherwise, are common in this vilayet. Confidence may be placed, moreover, in the tact and good-will constantly evinced by that functionary in his endeavour to procure justice and lenity for the rayahs under his control. Underpaid as he is, and surrounded by a most sorry set of ignorant and ignoble officials, the position of the present Kaïmakam of Eghin may well call for the utmost sympathy and support.

I have, &c.
(Signed) RAPHAEL A. FONTANA.

Inclosure 2 in No. 5.

List of Lands at Ilidg belonging to Armenians but seized (?) and tilled by the Local Mussulmans.

(Translation.)

Armenian Proprietors.	Lands.	Moslems who have seized Lands.
Hamal Oglou Melcon	2	Kuturaji Oglou Ahmet.
Kalhed Oglou Kirkor	1	Ditto.
Bizdik Oglou Khazar	1	Ditto.
Kalhed Oglou Thomas	5	Ditto.
Dazilli Oglou Toros	1	Ditto.
Saraf Oglou Osep	1	Ditto.
Saraf Oglou Aghin	1	Ditto.
Boyaji Oglou Kaspar	2	Ditto.
Kechi Oglou Tuvit	1	Contig Eumer.
Kopig Oglou Sahag	1	Ditto.
(?) Oglou Satenk	1	Ditto.
Boyaji Oglou Serkis	4	Ditto.
Saraf Oglou Osep	1	Pembig Oglou Hussein.
Kalhed Oglou Dikran	1	Ditto.
Kopig Oglou Sahag	1	Ditto.
Saraf Oglou Toros	1	Ditto.
Der Mateos Oglou Kirkor	1	(Cara Memo Oglou Ibrahim.)
Kyalun Oglou Ohanes	1	Ditto.
Hamal Oglou Kirkor	1	Tutin Oglou Hassan.
Kinar Oglou Mugherdich Mardiros ..	1	Bourekji Oglou Ibrahim.
Shebik Oglou Kirkor	1	Tireghi (?) Oglou Mehmet.
Ditto	1	Bayram Oglou Mehmet.
Saraf Oglou Aghin	1	Ditto.
Jibil Oglou Artin	1	Saghir Oglou Sofu.
Kopik Oglou Sahag	1	Sofu Mehmet.
Saraf Oglou Osep	1	Ditto.
Kalhid Oglou Tomas	1	Zevbi Oglou Jemal.
Kechi Oglou Marcar	1	Khurt Oglou Suleiman.
Yaziji Oglou Ohannes	2	Ditto.
Saraf Oglou Osep	1	Ditto.
Cholak Oglou Kirkor	1	Kelek Ismail.
Ditto	1	Hafiz Ibrahim Oglou Osman.
Saraf Oglou Toros	1	Zevbi Oglou Mehmet.
Jibil Oglou Zakar	1	(Name concealed by villagers).

No. 6.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received July 6.)

(No. 430.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, July 1, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum, respecting the appointment of Mehemet Ali Pasha, in the place of Zia Pasha, as Commander of the Erzeroum Division.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 6.

Consul Graves to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 26.)
Sir, *Erzeroum, June 17, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to report that Zekki Pasha, the Mushir commanding the 4th Army Corps, has succeeded in getting Mehemet Ali Pasha, an officer serving on his own staff at Erzingian, appointed in the place of Zia Pasha, the Commander of the 7th Erzeroum Division. Zia Pasha, who has done excellent service here in maintaining order and military discipline, and who worked very cordially with the Vali, Raouf Pasha, is ordered to Erzingian to take up the inferior post of Commander of the Reserve Division there.

This transfer must not be regarded merely as a military measure, but as a fresh proof of Zekki Pasha's hostility towards the Vali, whose position he is notoriously endeavouring to undermine. Raouf Pasha is seriously annoyed thereby, and at the same time shows signs of discouragement at his failure to obtain the sanction of the Central Government to various proposals of his own—such as the exile of the Kurd Pashas Hussein, Emin, and Temer; and the release of Kérim Bey and Schuk Effendi, now causelessly and illegally imprisoned at Erzeroum. His Excellency has also felt very keenly the fall of his son-in-law, Shamseddin Bey, late Vali of Van, who is another victim of Zekki Pasha's intrigues. If this line of conduct towards him is persisted in, it is to be apprehended that the Vali will soon have to face the alternative of resignation or dismissal—a calamity to the province the extent of which is almost incalculable under present circumstances, and to avert which, in my humble opinion, no stone should be left unturned.

I had the honour to report the substance of the above to your Excellency by telegraph to-day.

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. W. GRAVES.

No. 7.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received July 6.)

(No. 431.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, July 1, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Kharput, reporting the capture of the leader of the Sham Ushaghi tribe of Kurds in the Dersim.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 7.

Vice-Consul Fontana to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 29.)
Sir, *Kharput, June 12, 1897.*

IN connection with my despatch to your Excellency No. 27 of the 7th instant, mentioning the names of four of the most lawless Kurdish tribes in the Southern

Dersim, I now have the honour to inclose a cutting (with translation) from the "Maamuret-ul-Aziz" of the 9th instant, stating that two of the chief men of the Sham Ushaghi, one of the four tribes in question, have been arrested and imprisoned by the Acting Kaïmakam of Chemish-Ghesek.

Hassan Bey is to be congratulated upon his success in effecting the capture of these notorious cattle raiders so soon after entering upon his duties as Acting Kaïmakam.

I have, &c.
(Signed) RAPHAEL A. FONTANA.

Inclosure 2 in No. 7.

Extract from the "Maamuret-ul-Aziz" of June 9, 1897.

(Translation.)

THE Mutessarif of the Dersim writes that the Kaïmakam of Chemish-Ghesek has effected the arrest and imprisonment of Suleiman Chaush and the Aga, his brother, notorious brigands of the Sham Ushaghi Ashiret, together with that of one of their associates named Manzur.

No. 8.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received July 6.)

(No. 442.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, July 2, 1897.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 406 of the 18th June, respecting the state of the Hekkiari district, I have the honour to state, that in reply to my representations as to the alleged ill-treatment of the Nestorian Christians, the Foreign Minister has informed me that according to the report received from the Vali of Van, the Nestorians are well treated, and that there has never been the slightest intention of oppressing them.

His Excellency, therefore, regarded the reports of ill-treatment as devoid of foundation.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

No. 9.

The Marquess of Salisbury to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 165.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, July 9, 1897.*

I HAVE received your Excellency's despatch No. 386 of the 8th ultimo, reporting that permits have been obtained by the Acting British Consul at Damascus for the Irish Presbyterian Schools in that district, and have learnt with satisfaction that this question has at length been settled.

I am, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 10.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received July 10.)

(No. 451.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, July 10, 1897, 11:30 A.M.*

I RECEIVED yesterday the following telegram from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Bitlis:—

"With reference to Mr. Monahan's telegram No. 39 to your Excellency of the 5th May last, respecting the murder and robbery of Yusuf Yunan at Sairt, I have the

honour to report that the Porte has ordered the Vali to recover from the murderers the money taken from their victim at the time, or to sell their property instead.

"Instructions have accordingly been sent by the Vali to the Mutessarif of Siirt."

No. 11.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received July 14.)

(No. 44E.)

Constantinople, July 2, 1897.

My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Adana, inclosing a letter from the Rev. J. C. Martin, of Hadjin, giving an account of the state of affairs in that district, and describing the progress made in the weaving industry started there with the money granted by the Armenian Relief Committee.

I beg to call your Lordship's attention to the promising results anticipated by Mr. Martin, which will, in his opinion, soon render Hadjin independent of further assistance from the Relief Committee.

I have, &c.

(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 11.

Major Massy to Sir P. Currie.

Adana, June 23, 1897.

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to forward herewith a copy of a letter recently received from the Rev. J. C. Martin, of Hadjin, which will give your Excellency an idea of how matters are going on in those parts, as well as of the cotton weaving works which we have been able to introduce with the relief funds sent us for that purpose. I look on this employment of such funds as one of the most useful possible, and if all goes well, we should be able to show a very considerable return for the money granted for initial expenses.

If your Excellency can obtain for us the further 200 liras asked for by Mr. Martin, I can vouch for the good purpose to which it will be placed.

I have, &c.

(Signed) H. H. MASSY.

Inclosure 2 in No. 11.

The Rev. J. C. Martin to Major Massy.

Hadjin, June 12, 1897.

Dear Major Massy,

I FORGET if I wrote since receiving your good letter, posted the 17th May. I do not believe I did. The fact is I have been very much rushed during the past two or three weeks with accounts, examinations, &c. The closing exercises of the girls' school took place yesterday. Most of the Government officers, as well as a large assembling from the town, witnessed the proceedings, and all seemed highly pleased, notwithstanding that they had to sit it out for four and a-half hours. The Munvin asked the classes some questions, and at the close made a complimentary little speech. For a young and inexperienced man he does very well. His sympathies are in favour of progress and reform. The Binbashi, too (Head of the Regulars) has kept the soldiers well in hand, so that there has been no cause for complaint from any of the people since his arrival. In this respect there is a vast improvement over last year's management of the Redif. Perfect peace and quiet prevail at present both in Hadjin and its surrounding villages, and confidence is being rapidly restored.

The Vali, it appears, returned from Kars to Adana, but it is said he will come direct to Hadjin before long. It would be well if he were to see with his own eyes the poverty of the people here, the absence of roads, and other matters, which should be dealt with by the Government. The Munvin intended to propose to the Vali,

should he come, to make Hadjin a Mutessariflik, to extend the boundary to the north towards Azizie, so as to take in some Avshar and Turkish villages which have been a menace to Shahr, and which under the present arrangement cannot be controlled from this side. His plan is a good one, and if carried out, ought to help greatly towards securing better protection for the Christian villages to the north of us.

I have not hitherto written you much regarding the progress of our "fabrica," as the natives call it. We have at present ten looms working and have no room for more. Eight of these are in a building we rented for the purpose for six months. We found it difficult, indeed impossible, to get a suitable building (all are too dark), and situated so as to be convenient to a good stream of water. I have to contend with not only lack of sympathy, but a good deal of opposition in my efforts to establish this industry.

The "cussedness" and cross-grain character of this people is something that cannot be comprehended by one who has not had to deal with them. We wanted a lot on which to build.

I took the leading men of the Armenian community into my confidence and asked them to assist. Yes, they professed to be eager to help in such a good cause, and would get a piece of ground for me at a nominal price. They showed me two lots for either one of which they wanted £T. 150. I finally bought a piece of ground from a Moslem ever so much better than anything the Christian Aghas showed me, twice as large, for £T. 12!

We give the weavers and workers the same wages as are given in Marash, yet we have had considerable difficulty to get workers. We offered the merchants the products of our looms at a discount on the Marash prices equivalent to the "kira" (hire of carriage) and the commission they pay on what they bring from there, but they have not yet accepted our offer. We have on hand over 300 "top" of cloth—a "top" contains about eleven arshins (8 yards). We have material on hand for 2,000 "tops."

I have written to England to see if we can get a market there for our goods; if we can, we hope to extend our work very much more.

The new building is well under way and will have room for 100 or 150 looms, together with dyeing rooms, &c. Up to date nearly £T. 200 have gone for yarn, dyes, and wages, and returns for some time yet will be slow in coming in. I have also ordered some machinery from England which, with looms and other requisites, will bring the expenses up to £T. 300. Hitherto we have had some funds for relief, some of which we turned in for common labour on the building, but that is about finished now, so that to complete the building we shall have to use up what remains of the original grant of £T. 500. In view of the attitude of some of the people towards this work, we may have to sell at a loss to begin with, but if we get fairly started once it will be beyond their power to hinder us. The community as a whole rejoice in the undertaking: opposition comes mainly from selfish persons whose motto is never to countenance anything unless they control and derive benefit from it. What would you advise as to appealing to Sir P. Currie, say, for £T. 200 more to enable us to put this industry on a firm footing? I have in mind to set up some looms in Shahi and perhaps in Zórébakan.

If we have an additional grant I can go to work at once to do this, otherwise it will have to wait until profits begin to come in. However, I shall await your counsel in the matter of asking for more funds. As I have said, the relief funds are about exhausted. The need for aid is gradually diminishing: we have put the screw on tight to compel people to work; still there are some cases that will need to be helped at least till harvest. But if we have an additional grant for the industrial department, we can do, I think, without any more money for general relief.

Yours, &c.

(Signed) J. C. MARTIN.

No. 12.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received July 14.)

(No. 45I.)

Therapia, July 6, 1897.

My Lord,

WITH reference to my despatch No. 253 of the 14th April, which inclosed a copy of a despatch from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Kharput, giving a discouraging account of the results attained in his district by the enrolment of non-Moslem police-

men and gendarmes under the scheme of reforms of 1895, I now have the honour to transmit to your Lordship an abstract of the reports, which I have since received from our other Consuls in the eastern portion of Asia Minor, on the general subject of the employment of Christians in the Turkish service.

They confirm on the whole the unfavourable view taken by Mr. Vice-Consul Fontana, who, in the despatch above referred to, expressed his opinion that no useful purpose is served by the nomination of Armenians to posts under the Turkish Government, Christian Muavins, or Assistants to the Governors-General, and lesser Turkish officials have indeed been appointed in many places as required by the scheme of reforms, but they exercise no influence; only inferior men are chosen, and they are evidently mere cyphers except when they indorse without question the decisions of their Moslem superiors, and make a show of zeal in persecuting their own people.

Articles 20 and 22 of the reform scheme, which require a proportional enrolment of non-Mussulmans, policemen and gendarmes, have also been to some extent complied with, but as a rule Christians are admitted only to the lowest ranks of these services, and are quite unable to protect their co-religionists from outrage and extortion. They are generally treated with contempt by their Mussulman companions. On this point, however, Mr. Crow is able to report more favourably as regards the Vilayet of Bitlis, where he states that the Christian zaptiehs have given satisfaction, and have no particular grievances, being well treated by the authorities; but they are without influence for good or evil.

Major Bulman and Mr. Shipley, reporting respectively from Sivas and Angora, seem to consider that some little good is done by employing Christians, and the latter recommends the enrolment of a number more commensurate with the proportion borne by non-Moslems to the entire population. But Major Bulman adds that the admixture of Christians can never be counted on to do anything towards arresting the general state of decay and disorder that exists, and Mr. Shipley admits that it would not do to appoint Christians in the fanatical regions forming the eastern boundary of the Angora Vilayet.

In the great Kurdish region comprising the Vilayets of Erzeroum, Van, Bitlis, Kharput, and Diarbekir, the Consuls concur in thinking that the employment of Christians is worse than useless under present circumstances. The massacres have greatly increased the contempt with which the race of the victims is regarded by the ruling class of Moslems, and whatever might have been the effect of the reforms in quieter times, it is becoming evident that no scheme, however carefully devised, will now suffice to confer equal rights upon the Armenian population under the existing system of administration. Only a strong European control on the spot could bring about such a result.

Meanwhile, it would be too much to say that the efforts made by European Powers in favour of reforms have produced no beneficial effects in Asia Minor.

Admitting that the scheme of reform has not answered the expectations founded upon it, something has, nevertheless, been accomplished by the influence of our Consular officers, supported by the representations of Her Majesty's Embassy at the Porte, and by the removal of the most obnoxious Valis and other high officials.

The personal influence of an honest Governor still affords the best guarantee of peace and order, and it is gratifying to note that the list of capable officials of high rank in Asia Minor is a growing one. Favourable reports have come in as regards more especially the Valis of Erzeroum, Van, Bitlis, Adana, and Angora. In Sivas, Kharput, and Diarbekir a change of Valis has been likewise effected to the advantage of those provinces, and much evil is doubtless averted by the greater readiness of the new Governors to co-operate with our Consular officers.

The Kaïmakam of Eghin, the scene of the latest massacre, is also well spoken of, and a good many other officials appear to be doing their best to prevent a recurrence of disorder, though often thwarted by the Military Commander at Erzingian, on whose relations with the Civil Governors I commented in my despatch No. 426 of the 30th ultimo.

It will be my endeavour, as far as possible, to strengthen the hands of these Valis, and to obtain the appointment of others of the same calibre.

But it is impossible to take a hopeful view of the prospects of the region known as Kurdistan, where the Christian population will doubtless continue to be oppressed so long as the present political conditions prevail, and notwithstanding the efforts of Consuls and a few well-meaning Governors.

A Report giving the Turkish official view of the results of the scheme of reforms

has lately appeared in the Constantinople papers, and the figures are placed for comparison in a parallel column side by side with the inclosed abstract from the Consular Reports.

I also inclose a translation of the entire Turkish Report, extracted from the "Levant Herald."

It will be seen that credit is claimed for the accomplishment of the scheme in great part, and that the Commission, by which the Report was drawn up, professes anxiety to fill up the gaps that remain.

In view, however, of the conclusions reached by the Consuls as regards the reforms already put in force, I am not disposed to attach much importance to the proceedings of the Commission.

The Sultan, I understand, is anxious to shelve the Armenian question, and this Report is no doubt intended to proclaim to the world that the reforms are working quite satisfactorily, and that order has been fully restored in Asia Minor.

I have, &c.

(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 12.

REFORM SCHEME OF 1895.

Results in Asia Minor.

Consular Reports.	*Turkish Government Report*
Van.	
Police and Gendarmerie.—A few Christians appointed. They receive rations, but no pay *Muavins* (Assistants to Governors, &c.) are little more than tolerated, and their position is exceedingly difficult. *Christian officials useless under existing circumstances.*	41 Christians appointed to administrative posts, and 82 to the police. 68 tax-collectors, Moslem and Christian.
Bitlis.	
A few Christian police, chosen from the worst characters, and never paid. Otherwise well treated, but used as spies on the Christian community. In the gendarmerie no Christian officers, but some seventy privates at Mush and three at Bitlis. The three at Bitlis are constantly tendering their resignations, and one was put under arrest for doing so. The Mush gendarmes have received two months' pay in the last eight months. Otherwise they have no particular grievances. They are well treated by the authorities, and give satisfaction. A few Christian Muavins without influence. No Christian Kaïmakams. Mudirs of nahiés (communes) elected, but hitherto unemployed. As before the reforms, there are many Christian Mukhtars (Mayors), but they do no good. Tax-collectors and zaptiehs do what they like with them.	87 Christian police. 262 Christian gendarmes. 81 Moslem and Christian tax-collectors.

Consular Reports.

Nomination of Christians to Government appointments is of no effect for good or for evil. They are not ill-treated, but are allowed no authority, and are powerless to assist their co-religionists. Few, therefore, apply. They are *better out of it.*

Erzeroum.

Police.—16 Christians, including 5 Commissaries. One of the latter is distinguished by his zeal in persecuting Christians. The officers receive their pay fairly regularly; the men are many months in arrear.

Gendarmes.—45 Christians, out of a total of 218 Christians, allotted to Erzeroum under reform scheme. Have received only two or three months' pay in eighteen months.

Appointment of Christians to Government posts is likely to do more harm than good. Those already appointed are quite unable to exercise any influence.

Diarbekir.

Police.—12 Christians out of 70 or 80.

A few gendarmes and tax-collectors. Proportion of Christian gendarmes was to be one-fifth of the whole, but sufficient candidates do not come forward.

Mutesarif to Vali and two Kaimakams are Christian, but without influence.

Appointment of Christians has so far had no good result.

Kharpet.

Christian police and gendarmes resigning owing to ill-treatment.

"*Nomination of Armenians to posts under the Turkish Government is at present worse than useless . . . . and is likely to prejudice rather than advance the interests of the Armenian population.*"

No pay for two months.

Sivas.

Gendarmerie.—226 Christians in January 1897, out of the full proportion of 252 allotted under reform scheme.

In Administration, 73 Christians. Full proportion would be 100.

26 Christian tax-collectors, being full proportion.

Turkish Government Report.

15 Christians in administrative posts.
57 Christians in police.
60 Christians in gendarmerie.
88 Moslem and Christian tax-collectors.

70 Christians in administrative posts.
66 Christians in police.
144 Christians in gendarmerie.
87 Moslem and Christian tax-collectors.

39 Christians in administrative posts.
62 Christians in police.
83 Christians in gendarmerie.
88 Moslem and Christian tax-collectors.

30 Christians in administrative posts.
37 Christians in police.
162 Christians in gendarmerie.
155 Moslem and Christian tax-collectors.

Consular Reports.

Christians in police and gendarmerie treated exactly like Moslems and not ill-used. A few more Christian Muavins should be appointed to the sandjaks. "*Employment of Christians does something to ameliorate the condition of the Armenians, but it can never be counted on to do anything towards arresting the general state of decay and disorder that exists.*"

Aleppo.

Out of 800 officials, only 20 are Christians, and these insubordinate posts, all the higher officials being Moslem, except the Kaimakam of Zeitoun and the Mudir of Furnouz.

Christians form nearly one-sixth of the population, and were much employed before the Russo-Turkish war.

Christian members of Tribunals appointed regularly in equal proportion with Moslems.

Christian members of Council of Administration such as the Armenian and Greek Vicars are not notified of meetings, and rarely attend.

No Christians appointed to police force under scheme of reforms.

Gendarmerie.—Notice published in local Gazette calling for Christian recruits according to Imperial Iradé, requiring 8 per cent. of the force to be Christians. Entire force, 1,400; 32 Armenians enrolled at Marash, 4 at Aleppo, none at Urfa.

Trebizond.

Proper proportion of Christian police and gendarmerie would be 14 per cent. Under 3 per cent. now employed, many having resigned.

In Administration, the Assistant Governor-General at Trebizond, the Assistant Governors at Samsoun and Gumushkhane, a Judicial Inspector, and a Dragoman are Christians.

No Christian Assistants attached to the eighteen Kaimakams of the vilayet.

"*Few Christians of character are likely to covet any of the more subordinate State appointments.*

"The principle, however, of throwing open all branches of the public service to the various races and creeds is a sound one, and though not a new one, *will, I believe, if persevered in with judgment and adequacy, lead to a considerable amelioration* of the Government of the Empire."

Turkish Government Report.

Consular Reports.

Adana.

Only the worst sort of Christians will enlist, in absence of pay. *No use employing more under present circumstances.*

Ingeh.

Scarcely any Christian police and gendarmes. The proper proportion of Christian gendarmes would be 150. It would not be possible to get so many recruits, Christians being unwilling to leave their avocations in the towns, but 150 might be obtained, and might be safely employed except in fanatical eastern districts of the vilayet.

In the Administration, some 58 Christians are employed; 182 should be the correct proportion, according to the Christian population paying the military exemption tax.

Grievance lies in exclusion of Christians from all the higher posts.

Christians fairly well treated in all but eastern districts.

Turkish Government Report.

Inclosure 2 in No. 12.

Newspaper Extract.

ALL the Turkish papers this morning publish a Statement, prepared by the Committee of Reform under the presidency of the Minister of the Interior, enumerating the measures of reform which, thus far, have been carried into effect in the Asiatic provinces. In presenting the Statement, the Turkish papers point out that the measures it records are not confined to the six most distant vilayets of the Empire, inasmuch as it has pleased His Imperial Majesty, in his high and constant solicitude for the well-being of his faithful subjects, to decree their application throughout his vast dominions. The Schedule is as follows:—

"Non-Mussulmans have been appointed Assistants to the Valis in each province. As the Decree provides for the appointment of non-Mussulman Mnavins in the sandjaks and cazas where the Christians form the majority of the population, Christian Assistant Mutessarifs have been appointed to the Sandjaks of Guentz and Mush, Vilayet of Bitlis, and of Tokat and Karahissari Sharki, Province of Sivas.

"A non-Mussulman Kaïmakam, or Sub-Governor, has been appointed to the Caza of Haik, in the Vilayet of Sivas, and non-Mussulman Assistant Kaïmakams to the Cazas of Shirvan, Arabkir, Pehrsendjak, Silvan, Palo, Kighi, Baibourt, Merzifoon, Kerom, Kuvash, and Shitak. Great judgment has been exercised in choosing officials fully qualified in all respects as required by the Decree of Reforms.

"As regards the minor officials of the Administration, the number of non-Mussulmans, for whose admission into the public service the Decree provides, is: 73 for the Vilayet of Maamuret-ul-Aziz, 90 for the Vilayet of Diarbekir, 160 for Sivas, 105 for Erzeroum, and 116 for Van. According to the official Reports which have reached the Commission, the number of non-Mussulman officials appointed up to the present time is: 39 in the Vilayet of Maamuret-ul-Aziz, 70 in Diarbekir, 30 in Sivas, 45 in Erzeroum, and 41 in Van. The Commission has instructed the provincial authorities to bring up without delay the non-Mussulman appointments to the number prescribed by the Decree.

"Nahiehs, or communes, have been organized, and elections held, in the Vilayets of Erzeroum, Bitlis, Maamuret-ul-Aziz, Diarbekir, and Sivas, and the electoral Returns

have been sent to the Sublime Porte. The result of the elections in the Vilayets of Erzeroum and Bitlis, being in conformity with the prescriptions of the Decree, has been approved by the Commission, which has also concluded the examination, and is about to sanction the result of the elections in the Vilayet of Maamuret-ul-Aziz. The electoral Returns of Sivas are under consideration; those of Diarbekir, being defective, have been invalidated. In the Vilayet of Van, the organization of nahiehs is now taking place. The Mudirs of nahiehs and their Secretaries will henceforth receive a fixed salary.

"Reports just received announce the appointment of Mukhtars and members of the Councils of Elders in many parts of the six provinces. The Councils of nahiehs and of Elders are also invested with the authority of Judges of the Peace. The Regulations to this effect, drawn up by the Ministry of Justice, have been approved by the Council of State, and are now under the consideration of the Cabinet.

"Judicial Inspectors, Mussulmans and non-Mussulmans in equal numbers, have been appointed to the Anatolian vilayets, with instructions to send Reports at regular intervals to the Commission of Reforms.

"The police force has been reorganized in the chief towns of vilayets, sandjaks, and cazas. In the Vilayet of Erzeroum, 57 Christian policemen have been appointed; in that of Diarbekir, 66; and 62, 87, 82, and 37 to those of Maamuret-ul-Aziz, Bitlis, Van, and Sivas respectively. In the Province of Erzeroum, where the organization of nahiehs has been completed, a policeman has been appointed to the capital of each nahieh. The authorities are now awaiting the instructions of his Highness the Grand Vizier as to the pay of the police. In the other five vilayets the police force is in process of organization.

"The gendarmerie has been reorganized in all the six vilayets: in the Province of Erzeroum it consists of 1,190 officers and men; Sivas, 1,500; Van, 1,002; Bitlis, 1,133; Maamuret-ul-Aziz, 1,282; Diarbekir, 1,329. The pay of the gendarmes will be higher than that of the soldier, but officers' pay will be on the same scale as that of the army. Regulations specially applicable to the gendarmerie have been prepared at the Ministry of War, and are now under the consideration of Ministers. As regards the proportion of Christian gendarmes, the Commission of Reforms has fixed it at 280 for the Vilayet of Bitlis; 200 for Maamuret-ul-Aziz; 178 for Diarbekir; 255 for Sivas; 207 for Erzeroum; and 342 for Van. The applications of Christians, however, for service in the gendarmerie were below the required number, and thus far only 202 Christians have been enlisted in Bitlis, 83 in Maamuret-ul-Aziz, 144 in Diarbekir, 162 in Sivas, and 60 in Erzeroum. The Ministry of the Interior sent stringent orders to the provincial authorities concerning the maintenance of order and the protection of the mail service.

"When the organization of nahiehs is accomplished the Councils will appoint forest guards. Most of these guards have been provisionally appointed in the Vilayets of Bitlis, Maamuret-ul-Aziz, and Diarbekir. They wear a special uniform; and Regulations defining their rights and duties have been drawn up by the Commission of Reforms and sent to the Grand Vizierate.

"As regards the prison service, instructions have been sent to the provincial authorities strictly to apply the laws in force. The prisons will be repaired or rebuilt on sanitary principles. As in some places there are neither doctors nor architects, municipal physicians and civil engineers have been sent to the capital of each sandjak and caza to design the new buildings. The surveys for the repair or building of the prisons of Bitlis and Maamuret-ul-Aziz have been concluded, and the Grand Vizierate has requested His Majesty the Sultan to sanction the necessary outlay.

"Boards of preliminary investigation have been formed in each of the six provinces, to see that no one is unjustly arrested and imprisoned. Regulations for these Boards are now under the consideration of the Commission of Reform.

"Committees will be appointed to examine the title-deeds of landed property. Regulations defining the rights and duties of these Committees have been drawn up. Four officials will be sent from Constantinople to superintend the constitution of these Committees.

"In addition to the police and gendarmerie, tax-collectors, Mussulmans and Christians in proportion to the population have been appointed: 88 to Erzeroum, 156 to Sivas, 81 to Bitlis, 88 to Maamuret-ul-Aziz, 87 to Diarbekir, and 68 to Van.

"The system of tax-collecting adopted last year having given satisfactory results, the Commission of Reform has ordered its continuation this year. The forced labour system has already been abolished in some vilayets, and this measure has now become general.

"Negotiations are proceeding between the Ministry of Education and the Commission of Reform, for establishing a budget for education for each province. A Commission will be appointed to control these budgets.

"It will be seen from what precedes that the essential portions of the Decree of Reform have been fully carried into effect. As already stated, the principal points are the appointment of non-Mussulmans as Assistant Governors-General; the nomination of non-Mussulman Assistant-Governors to the sandjaks and cazas where the Christian element is in the majority; the eligibility of non-Mussulmans to the office of Kaimakam; the appointment of Judicial Inspectors, Mussulman and non-Mussulman, in proportion to the number of inhabitants of either faith; the institution of Boards of preliminary investigation, and the organization of the police and of the corps of tax-collectors. In the Administration and gendarmerie, the number of non-Mussulmans employed is not yet in exact proportion to the Christian population, but as regards the Administration this will be adjusted by the appointment of Christians to vacancies as they occur. In the gendarmerie, the Christian element has not been brought up to its full complement because the number of those who offered themselves for enlistment was insufficient; their places, however, will be reserved, and every effort will be made to fill the vacancies.

"The organization of nahiehs and the election of their Councils have been concluded in three of the six provinces. The electoral Returns in the other three are under examination by the Commission of Reforms. Only two provisions, therefore, of the Decree, viz., that relating to the police, and that concerning the definitive appointment of watchmen in the villages, remain unfulfilled. The others, thirty in number, have been applied in the six vilayets of Anatolia.

"By Imperial Order the execution of the same measures of reform is actively proceeding in the other vilayets of the Empire, and their application will soon be an accomplished fact. When they are carried into effect a special Statement will be published."

No. 13.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received July* 14.)

(No. 453.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, July* 8, 1897.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 438 of the 25th ultimo, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul-General at Bagdad respecting the visit to the Vilayet of Mosul of the Russian Consul at Van.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 13.

Consul-General Loch to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 370.)
Sir, *Bagdad, June* 16, 1897.

IN continuation of my despatch No. 58, dated the 1st instant, I have the honour very respectfully to submit for your Excellency's information copy (in translation) of a further letter, No. 25, dated the 8th idem from Mr. Nimrod Rassam, British Consular Agent at Mosul, giving some further particulars about the movements in that vilayet of the Russian Consul of Van; also the arrival there of M. Viette as temporary Consular Agent for France.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. LOCH.

Inclosure 2 in No. 13.

Mr. Rassam to Consul-General Loch.

(No. 25.)
(Translation.) *Bagdad, June* 8, 1897.

WITH reference to my letter No. 23, dated the 25th ultimo, I have the honour to inform you that the Russian Consul did not go to Hadhir, but after visiting Tal Nimrud he went to see the monastery of Sheikh Matti, and thence proceeded to Sheikh Adi, the temple of the Yezedis (which was taken by the troops in the time and by the orders of Farik Omar Pasha), and afterwards visiting Mirza Beg, the Amir of the Yezedis, at the village Ba'adri, returned here and paid visits to the Consular Agent for France, and all the chief clergies, and on the 27th ultimo returned to his place, viâ Amadieh and Julamerg, and it is said that he proceeded in that direction in order to inquire into the state of the Tiyarieh and see Mar Shemoon, for, according to what I heard, his Beatitude and all the Nestorians under him have agreed to change their creed and follow that of the Orthodox Greek, with the hope of obtaining assistance from the Russian Government for their deliverance from the oppressions and injuries they suffer.

On the 25th ultimo there arrived here one named M. Viette as a temporary Consular Agent for France, in place of M. Rais, the former Consular Agent, who left for France three days after arrival of his successor.

(Signed) NIMROD RASSAM.

No. 14.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received July* 14.)

(No. 458.)
My Lord, *Therapia, July* 8, 1897.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 387 of the 8th June, respecting the Eghin massacre, I have the honour to inform your Lordship that the Turkish translation of Mr. Fontana's Report, prepared in Her Majesty's Embassy, has been submitted by the Minister for Foreign Affairs to the Sultan.

No instructions have as yet reached the Porte on the subject.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

No. 15.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received July* 14.)

(No. 459.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, July* 9, 1897.

AS I had the honour to report to your Lordship in my telegram No. 424 of the 27th June, the Foreign Minister privately informed the Representatives of the Great Powers that, subject to their concurrence, the Porte proposed to reappoint Naoum Pasha as Governor-General of the Lebanon on the expiration of his present term of office, towards the end of August. The Ambassadors discussed this proposal at their meeting on the 26th June, and no objection was raised to it; but it was agreed that, before we gave our formal assent, we should call the attention of the Porte to the non-execution of the stipulations made in the Protocol of August 1892 at the time of Naoum Pasha's first appointment, and accepted by the Porte. A copy of this Protocol was forwarded to your Lordship by Sir C. Ford in his despatch No. 11, Treaty, of the 18th August, 1892.

We at the same time agreed to request Tewfik Pasha to embody his proposal in a *note verbale*, so as to give us an opportunity of replying officially. I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship copies of his Excellency's note, and of the identic reply of the Ambassadors, in which they stated that before examining the question of the reappointment of Naoum Pasha, they wished to be informed as to what steps have been taken by the Sublime Porte, since the signature of the Protocol of 1892, to insure the stricter execution of the Regulations for the administration of the Lebanon.

I have also the honour to inclose copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul-General at Beyrout, in answer to my inquiries, containing his observations on the proposed appointment.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 15.

Tewfik Pasha to Sir P. Currie.

Constantinople, le 30 Juin, 1897.

LE Ministre des Affaires Étrangères présente ses compliments à son Excellence M. l'Ambassadeur de Sa Majesté Britannique et a l'honneur de l'informer que dans la réunion de demain, Jeudi, il sera aussi question du renouvellement du mandat de son Excellence Naoum Pacha, Gouverneur du Liban.

Towfik Pacha saisit cette occasion pour réitérer à son Excellence Sir Philip Currie l'assurance, &c.

Inclosure 2 in No. 15.

Sir P. Currie to Tewfik Pasha.

Constantinople, le 6 Juillet, 1897.

L'AMBASSADEUR d'Angleterre a l'honneur d'accuser réception à son Excellence le Ministre des Affaires Étrangères de la note du 30 Juin dernier par laquelle elle a bien voulu lui faire connaître que dans la prochaine réunion de Topkané il serait question du renouvellement du mandat de son Excellence Naoum Pacha, Gouverneur du Liban.

L'Ambassadeur d'Angleterre croit devoir rappeler que dans le Protocole signé le 15 Août, 1892, lors de la nomination de son Excellence Naoum Pacha, les Représentants des Grandes Puissances ont formulé en commun certaines observations sur des changements apportés aux dispositions du Règlement du Liban.

Ces observations portaient notamment :—

1. Sur les conditions dans lesquelles devaient être élus les membres du Medjliss Administratif et les attributions de cette Assemblée.

2. Sur les modifications apportées sans l'assentiment des Puissances à l'organisation judiciaire du Liban.

3. Sur les conditions irrégulières dans lesquelles les Magistrats étaient nommés et révoqués.

Les Représentants des Grandes Puissances insistaient alors sur la nécessité d'assurer la stricte exécution du Réglement de 1864, et son Excellence le Ministre des Affaires Étrangères déclarait que la Sublime Porte s'engageait à le faire intégralement respecter par le nouveau Gouverneur.

Avant d'examiner la question du renouvellement du mandat de son Excellence Naoum Pacha, l'Ambassadeur d'Angleterre prie son Excellence M. le Ministre des Affaires Étrangères de vouloir bein lui faire connaître les mesures qui ont été prises depuis lors pour assurer le respect du Règlement précité et le mettre à même de juger si les engagements de la Sublime Porte ont été exécutés.

Inclosure 3 in No. 15.

Consul-General Drummond Hay to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 37. Confidential.)

Beyrout, June 30, 1897.

Sir,

WITH reference to your Excellency's telegram of the 27th instant, and to my reply of the 29th instant, regarding Naoum Pasha and the stipulations of the Protocol of August 1892, I have the honour to state with regard to Article 1 that the system hitherto followed at the election of candidates for the Administrative Council should be thoroughly reorganized.

I was convinced of this necessity after watching the recent elections in the Caza of the Meten, and I had intended to report to your Excellency on the subject after the nomination of the new Governor.

It is most important in the interests of the Lebanon that the members of the Council should be *bonâ fide* representatives of their respective constituents, and, although irregularities have diminished during Naoum Pasha's Administration, the elections are still conducted on unsatisfactory principles, resulting in the return of members who are mere nominees of the Governor.

According to the Regulations, the Council is composed of twelve members, of whom four are Maronites, two Greek Orthodox, two Druses, one Greek Catholic, one Mussulman, and one Metwali.

During the Governorship of Rustem Pasha a Vice-President was added to the Council, who is nominated by the Government, but has no vote in the deliberations. This post has always been conferred upon a Maronite.

The elections of one-third of the members take place every two years, when the Sheikhs of the cazas concerned assemble on a fixed date at the residence of the Kaïmakam.

In former times their votes were merely inscribed by a clerk in the presence of the Kaïmakam, but of late years, and during Naoum Pasha's Administration, the proceedings have been conducted by ballot. Intimidation is, however, still resorted to by Government officials, and, as the Sheikhs have to sign their votes and to affix their official seals to them, it is not surprising that the candidate favoured by the Governor-General is, as a rule, successful.

It is also alleged, and, I believe, with some foundation, that Agents of the Government occasionally employ threatening language, and instances are known of their having secured the signatures of Sheikhs prior to the elections. Candidates for election are in the habit of seeking the support of foreign Consuls who may be inclined to favour them, and it frequently happens that a member is elected through the pressure brought to bear on the Governor-General by one or more of the foreign Consulates.

With a view to remedy this state of things and insure the independence of the elections, I beg to submit that the Governor-General should receive categorical instructions to introduce effective measures for the abolition of such abuses.

According to the present system the Sheikhs of all sects vote in common, and it thus happens that the members are elected by the predominating sect of the caza. In the Meten, for instance, there are about seventy-two Sheikhs, of whom fifty are Maronites and the remainder Greek Orthodox and Druses.

The votes are, consequently, altogether in the hands of the Maronite Sheikhs, and the other two sects are rarely, if ever, fairly represented on the Council in accordance with the spirit of the Organic Laws.

Under these circumstances, I beg to suggest the introduction of new Rules at the elections, empowering the Sheikhs of each sect to elect their own members.

In cazas where the minor sects are not represented, their Sheikhs could vote together with the Sheikhs of the other communities.

I believe that such an arrangement would meet with the approval of all the minor sects in the Lebanon. Several of my colleagues hold similar views on the subject, and especially the Russian and German.

The stipulations of the Protocol relating to guarantees against the dismissal of Magistrates without an inquiry have not been strictly adhered to by Naoum Pasha. He has never, as far as I am aware, removed a Magistrate without just grounds, but the inquiries in each case were not sufficiently formal, and I would therefore suggest that they should be made in future by the Council of Administration, whose Report would be submitted to the Governor-General for his final decision.

With regard to Article 2 of the Protocol and the re-establishment of the judicial organization of 1861, I beg to state that the modifications were introduced by Wassa Pasha, with the view of assimilating the Tribunals of the Lebanon to those established throughout the Empire under the Judicial Reforms.

On his death the Maronites appealed to the Ambassadors of the Great Powers at Constantinople for the maintenance of the Organic Statutes, and especially of Articles VI, X, and XI, and their Petition resulted in the Protocol of the 15th August, 1892.

Mr. Hallward, who was Acting Consul-General at that time, reported in a despatch, No. 42, Confidential, of the 11th July, 1892, against the re-establishment of the judicial organization of 1864, as he considered the present system more equitable

than that prescribed in the Statute. He also pointed out that Rüstem Pasha had divided the Court of Appeal into two branches, one for civil and the other for criminal cases, with six Judges for each.

An attempt was made by Wassa Pasha in 1883 to return to the original scheme, but he soon gave it up, and re-established the Criminal Court, which is still in force.

Naoum Pasha on his arrival found, to use his own words, in a letter addressed to me on the subject, that "the judicial organization of 1864 failed to meet the actual exigencies of the country, and that in penal matters it would be incompatible with the new legislation in force."

He also found that all the Consuls-General were agreed from the commencement of his mission to recognize in principle that the actual organization offers the greater guarantees of justice and impartiality.

On the receipt of your Excellency's telegram I immediately wrote to Naoum Pasha, reminding him of his verbal assurances that the charges against Skender Bey Tuosi would be fully investigated. His Excellency informed me, in reply, that from the inquiries he had already made, nothing had transpired against Skender Bey. The denunciations were all anonymous, and no one had come forward to substantiate them, notwithstanding that he had made it publicly known that he had sought information.

His Excellency assured me that he was prepared to form the Commission of Inquiry that might be considered expedient with a view to bring matters to the light of day, and any advice proffered to him in connection with the question would be taken into serious consideration.

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. DRUMMOND HAY.

No. 16.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received July* 14.)

(No. 463.)
My Lord, *Therapia, July* 9, 1897.

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Lordship some notes by Mr. Block suggested by the announcement in the Turkish papers of the appointment of Sadi Bey, ex-Accountant of the Ministry of Public Works, to the post of Mutessarif of Ourfa.

This appointment is no doubt a blow aimed at the Young Turkey party, of which Sadi Bey is understood to be one of the most influential supporters. I have no personal acquaintance with him, but his son, who was at Cambridge University and served for some years in the diplomatic service, frequently visits me.

There is no doubt that the hostility towards the arbitrary rule of the Palace shown by the educated Moslems, stimulated as it is by the publications of Turks who have taken refuge in foreign countries, causes much anxiety to the Sultan. There have been many arrests lately, especially of students in the military schools, and the proposal of the Porte to introduce inspectors into the British Post Office, of which I am forwarding a copy by this mail, shows that the dissemination of the newspapers and pamphlets printed abroad has a very disturbing effect. I am told that these papers are widely read by the troops in Thessaly.

The reliance of the Turkish reform party on England no doubt adds to the Sultan's distrust and fear of its members; and the attack recently made against English policy in regard to the evacuation of Thessaly which was vigorously pushed here by the agents of the Palace and was repeated by the Austrian and German newspapers in the pay of the Sultan, was intended, by appealing to the patriotism of the reformers, to alienate them from England. For the moment it appears to have had some success, and the Turkish friends of England, both here and abroad, expressed disappointment at the partiality shown towards the Christians by Her Majesty's Government.

It is not likely that this feeling will be of long duration, but there is an evident intention to attack the Sultan if he consents to the evacuation of Thessaly, on the ground that he has brought this disgrace on his country by his misgovernment, which made it

impossible for the European Powers to consent to any addition of territory to the Ottoman Government.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Enclosure in No. 16.

Memorandum.

THE following appointments are gazetted this morning:—

Sadi Bey, ex-Accountant of the Ministry of Public Works, to be Mutessarif of Ourfa.

Mehmed Akil Bey, one of the Sultan's Private Secretaries, to be Mudvin of Kastamouni.

With regard to Sadi Bey, the appointment is no more nor less than exile. He has been for many years a friend of this Embassy, and is, no doubt, a leading member of the Young Turkey party, and exceedingly inimical to the anti-English policy of the Sultan. He is a rich man, and, possibly, will not proceed to the post if he can help it. He is the father of Reshid Bey, whom your Excellency knows, and the appointment is exciting a good deal of comment in Turkish circles.

I learn that a great many arrests are taking place among the Young Turkey party, which is said to number at least 30,000 individuals in the capital; they lean towards England, and consider that the Sultan is selling the country to Russia, whose aim they are convinced is to assimilate this country, be it by war or alliance, and which object they are determined to resist to their utmost. The Medical School has, I hear, been surrounded by a cordon, and two high officials, whose names I cannot obtain, have been recently tried for sedition. In the provinces also, where the spread of revolutionary literature is growing rapidly, numerous arrests are taking place.

The Sultan is very nervous at the discontent caused by his anti-English policy, and, whilst he represses the movement on the one hand, he is endeavouring to show that it is not he who desires to alienate England and favour Russia. On this account, probably, the "Maloumat," a Palace organ, has on several occasions lately, by order, published articles more or less friendly to England, which articles the editor never fails to point out to me, and it is said that, on the return of Munir Pasha, the Sultan will pretend to show a still more favourable attitude to England.

The Sultan is far too clever to believe in Russia's protestations of friendship, and, whilst relying on that Power's influence in the Concert to prevent any use of coercion against him and on her help to perpetuate his own personal despotism, it is quite on the cards that he will ungratefully throw her over if he can see his way to do so in his own interest.

(Signed) ADAM BLOCK.

Constantinople, July 7, 1897.

No. 17.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received July* 14.)

(No. 466.)
My Lord, *Therapia, July* 9, 1897.

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a telegram which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Diarbekir, suggesting that exemption from the payment of tithes for this year should be granted to the Christian villages which have been plundered in that vilayet.

I instructed Mr. Block to mention this suggestion to the Foreign Minister, but his Excellency replied that its adoption was out of the question.

In the case of the military exemption tax, which is a personal tax, remission, he said, was possible in case of want of power to pay, but the tithe being one-tenth of the produce and paid in kind, it cannot be urged that the villagers have not the wherewithal to meet the demands of the tax-gatherer.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 17.

Vice-Consul Waugh to Sir P. Currie.

(Telegraphic.) *Diarbekir, July 6, 1897.*

WOULD it be possible to obtain for plundered Christian villages exemption from tithes for this year? Most villages owe what crops they have to foreign relief.

Such favour on the part of His Imperial Majesty would be a great boon and, I believe, would have very good effect.

If possible, orders should be given at once, as the tithes will be sold next week.

No. 18.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received July 18.)

(No. 469.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, July 18, 1897, 10·5 A.M.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 475 of the 16th July, I have the honour to report that Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van now telegraphs that £T. 50 have been levied as a tax on the cattle imported for relief purposes.

No. 19.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received July 20.)

(No. 468.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, July 12, 1897.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 913 of the 15th November, 1896, I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of an article which has recently appeared in the local press respecting the reorganization of the police in this city.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 19.

Newspaper Extract.

LA réorganisation des divers services du Ministère de la Police, auquel son Excellence Chéfik Bey a consacré son activité depuis que Sa Majesté Impériale le Sultan l'a nommé titulaire de ce Département, peut maintenant être considérée comme un fait accompli. Nous en avons parlé à plusieurs reprises, indiquant sommairement les grandes lignes de cette vaste conception. Comme depuis lors des modifications y ont été introduites, à la suite de diverses conférences tenues par le Ministre de la Police avec les hauts fonctionnaires de son Département, nous résumerons aujourd'hui les points essentiels de la nouvelle organisation, telle qu'elle fonctionne actuellement, Sa Majesté Impériale le Sultan ayant ordonné sa mise en pratique provisoire, à titre d'expérimentation avant de lui accorder sa sanction Impériale.

Le projet de son Excellence Chéfik Bey remanie complètement le personnel policier auquel est confié le service de la sûreté publique dans la capitale, les faubourgs, et sa banlieue. Ce personnel est divisé en corps, divisions, et subdivisions. Sept agents de police, placés sous les ordres d'un sergent ("tchaouch"), sont commandés par un Commissaire de 3e Classe. Deux groupes pareils obéissant à un Commissaire de 2e Classe, quatre à un Commissaire de 1re Classe. Chaque brigade comprend donc trente-neuf agents et chefs, deux brigades forment une subdivision, et deux de celle-ci une division. La surveillance générale est exercée par un nombre suffisant d'Inspecteurs de la Sûreté ("Mufetichs"). Cette organisation englobe pour le moment plus de 2,000 agents de tous grades, mais son Excellence Chéfik Bey sollicite l'élévation de l'effectif à 3,000.

Ce qui caractérise surtout le nouveau plan des services policiers, c'est que désormais les agents subalternes n'auront plus la même initiative qu'autrefois; ils ne pourront agir que d'après des ordres hiérarchiquement transmis. Les chefs qui auront donné ceux-ci seront responsables de leur exécution envers l'autorité supérieure, et tout abus commis par les subalternes, imputés à ceux qui les commandent. Les responsabilités seront donc clairement et rapidement établies en tout état de cause.

Une discipline sévère est prescrite par les nouveaux Règlements, qui stipulent des punitions pour les moindres cas de négligence, et le renvoi du corps à la suite d'un abus, ou de preuve d'incapacité. Aussi le recrutement se fait-il avec la plus scrupuleuse attention. Des feuilles signalétiques sont établies pour chaque agent, sur lesquelles sont indiqués ses états de service depuis son entrée dans le corps, les punitions, réprimandes, et récompenses reçues, et des notes sommaires concernant sa vie et ses mœurs. La rémunération des agents du service policier est, en ce moment, l'objet de la sollicitude de son Excellence le Ministre de la Police, qui espère, grâce à la haute protection de Sa Majesté Impériale le Sultan, parvenir à leur assurer le payement régulier et intégral de leur solde. L'énergie que le Ministre a déployée jusqu'ici autorise pleinement l'espoir que ce dernier point capital sera aussi heureusement atteint.

Enfin, l'organisation de son Excellence Chéfik Bey sera successivement étendue aux provinces de l'Empire. Elle aura, sans aucun doute, pour résultat de garantir complètement la paix intérieure, d'assurer aussi la tranquillité des esprits et la concorde entre les populations.

L'initiative de Sa Majesté Impériale le Sultan veille à l'exécution de toutes les parties du vaste plan qui doit former l'ensemble des réformes, dont l'application a été depuis longtemps décrétée pour la prospérité de l'Empire et des populations Ottomanes.

No. 20.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received July 20.)

(No. 469.)
My Lord, *Therapia, July 12, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Adana respecting the manner in which the military exemption tax is levied in that vilayet.

I have instructed Mr. Block to make representations on the subject to the Ottoman Government.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 20.

Major Massy to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 66.)
Sir, *Adana, June 27, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to point out to your Excellency the injustice of the manner in which the tax on Armenians in place of military service is levied. This tax is paid as a collective one by the entire community. The result of this system is that the Sultan's assurances that this tax is remitted for two years on those subjects who are too poor to pay is a pure quibble, the wealthier members having to pay for the poorer. Moreover, this leads to oppression, as the richer men "squeeze" the poor so as not to pay for them themselves.

I spoke lately on this subject to the Vali, asking him to remit the tax, as promised, on those too destitute to pay. He replied that these orders were given, and that no one too poor was to be pressed for any tax. But on further questioning he was obliged to confess that the total amount of the tax had to be handed in by the community at so much a-head on the male population.

I beg to recommend this injustice to your Excellency's kind consideration.

I have, &c.
(Signed) P. H. H. MASSY

No. 21.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received July 20.)

(No. 470.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, July 12, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copies of two despatches which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Adana, reporting on the large number of Armenian prisoners confined in that town. On receipt of Major Massy's second despatch, reporting the failure of his representations to the Vali, I instructed Mr. Block to call the attention of the Porte to this continued imprisonment of Armenians for trifling offences, and to suggest that instructions should be sent to the local authorities to stop prosecutions in such cases, and to release the prisoners whose condemnation is not in accordance with the law.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 21.

Major Massy to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 59.)
Sir, *Adana, June 21, 1897.*

WITH reference to your Excellency's cypher telegram of the 12th instant, confirmed by that of the 16th instant, I have the honour to forward herewith a list of Armenian prisoners now confined at Adana.

I shall call on the Governor-General to-morrow, and ask him what he can do to bring to trial and release where innocent these Armenians. I shall also observe to him that the number of these prisoners has increased, instead of diminishing, during his appointment as Vali. I would beg that your Excellency might assist me, should it be considered advisable, by causing orders to be sent to the Vali to desist from filling his prisons with Armenians who are falsely accused by their enemies, or from confining men for acts which are considered perfectly harmless in all countries boasting civilization and freedom.

I have the honour to report that an Armenian priest was stabbed by an Aintab Moslem on the Adana Bridge a few days ago.

I am also informed that the Christians of the Payas district remain dissatisfied with the result of the Vali's visit to these parts. It appears that a search is being made there for ten supposed suspects, and general want of confidence and tranquillity prevails in these parts.

The state of prisoners confined in this vilayet calls for strong protest. I am told that "the condition of Christians in the prisons is terrible. Moslem prisoners without right or any hindrance blaspheme the honour, the Cross, the Bible, the religion of these Christians, who are at once placed in irons, and beaten by the prison authorities should they unfortunately utter one word of complaint."

I am placing the whole matter before the Governor-General, and shall inform your Excellency of what he has to say on this disgraceful state of affairs. I am still of opinion that his efforts to improve matters will be greatly discounted by the evil influence of the Defterdar and vilayet Dragoman, already adversely reported upon by me. I shall endeavour to sound the Vali on his intentions as to retaining these officials, and shall do all in my power to cause their removal, while at the same time acting with caution in this matter.

It will perhaps be well to await my further report of my interview with the Vali before causing any orders to be sent to him, as he has hitherto exhibited a desire to listen to my representations, and I would not wish him to think I was reporting unfavourably upon him, whereas he may himself be ignorant of the facts I mention to your Excellency.

I have, &c.
(Signed) P. H. H. MASSY.

Inclosure 2 in No. 21.

List of Armenian Prisoners at Adana.

1. Garabed Messerlian, native of Adana, condemned to be exiled for life for having made use of dangerous words.
2. Sarkis Arnadjiatt, of Kaisirieh, politically accused for having no passport.
3. Avedis Manoukhughian, companion of No. 2.
4. Boghos Tighlérian, of Chok Merjumen, accused on account of some papers said to be compromising.
5. Usep Hatchérian, of Adana, accused of having given shelter to No. 4.
6. Artin Perouchan Sarkissian, of Adana, condemned to three years' imprisonment for false evidence given in a political case.
7. Murcar Bezikian, of Adana, accused of being a Hunchagist.
8. Agop Yérissian, of Gemrlin, condemned to two years' imprisonment for not having a teskereh.
9. Garabet Boghassian, of Hadjin, and
10. Gozzos Sarkissian, of Hadjin, accused of having purchased stolen property.
11. Kyriakos Ohanessian, of Kharput, accused of theft.
12. Garabet Genderelyan, of Adana, condemned to death for political reasons, still confined.
13. Mihran Bartadjian, of Adana, accused of using subversive language.
14. Garabed Danhouyan, of Adana, and
15. Mihran Garabetian, of Adana, accused of using subversive language.
16. Toros Hatchérian, of Adana, accused of having in his possession compromising papers.
17. Hatché Abrahamian, of Tchoumkoush, exiled without cause, and after nine months released, but ordered to be re-exiled now for no reason.
18. Manouk Hibelian, of Hadjin, accused two years ago of using subversive language.
19. Ohannes Yeremian, of Adana, condemned to three years' imprisonment for selling powder to the Zeitounlis.
20. Tatris Ohanessian, companion of No. 19.
21. Dikran, of Payas, condemned to three years' imprisonment, accused of having aided prisoners to escape.
22. Stephan Arzouyan, condemned to death for political reasons, still imprisoned. He is kept in irons.
23. Zachar Katirdji, of Kharput, accused of having received a letter from America.
24. Mourat, of Smyrna, condemned to death for a case respecting some mules.
25. Mihran Keklikian, of Adana, imprisoned for the past two years for using subversive language.
26. Hadji Artin, of Diarbekir, condemned to one year's imprisonment for not having a teskereh.
27. Topal Kevork, of Adana, condemned to six months' imprisonment for theft.

Inclosure 3 in No. 21.

Major Massy to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 67.)
Sir, *Adana, June 28, 1897.*

REFERRING to my despatch No. 59, dated the 21st instant, on Armenian prisoners at Adana, I have the honour to inform your Excellency that I spoke to the Vali on this subject on the 22nd June, and he stated that certain cases would be disposed of shortly so that no charges should remain untried.

I beg to submit to your Excellency that the cases of imprisoned Armenians have increased very much at Adana lately, that the punishments awarded, such as two years' imprisonment for not having a passport, or for having some supposed forbidden paper in their possession, is far too heavy, and that a wholly unjust scale of punishments exists according to whether the condemned man be Moslem or Christian.

While being too clever to act openly against the law, the Vali is distinctly prejudiced in his feelings against Christians, and it would be well to cause a word of warning to be sent to him as to his filling his prison with men who would be regarded as innocent of all crime in any but a barbarous country.

I have, &c.
(Signed) P. H. H. MASSY.

No. 22.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received July 20.)

(No. 473.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, July* 20, 1897, 11·55 A.M.

MAJOR BULMAN has been staying on at Tokat, by my orders, until I could obtain the decision of the Sultan with regard to the execution of the sentences passed by the Special Commission. Hassan Fehmi has not been allowed to leave, although he has reported that the work of the Commission is finished, and the Russian Vice-Consul also remains at Tokat.

I have been pressed by Major Bulman to allow him to return to Sivas, and he has stated in a recent telegram that, in his opinion, the continued presence of himself and his Russian colleague was producing a bad effect.

I inquired what were the grounds upon which his opinion rested, and have now received from him the following telegraphic reply, dated Tokat, the 19th instant:—

"Shakir Pasha left Sivas last Saturday for Erzinghian. Two Armenian shops were looted last week, and two Mussulmans have been killed on the road outside the town. An Armenian has been wounded in the town, and an Armenian gendarme in the district. The irritation of the Mussulmans against the Armenians is increased by our prolonged stay and that of the Commission, which is regarded as proving that the Powers have no authority."

After consulting the Russian Ambassador I propose to telegraph further on the subject. Some days ago the Russian Dragoman heard at the Palace that the Sultan would not confirm the death sentences, as he considered that a bad effect would be produced upon public opinion if they were carried out, and that, bearing in mind the remission of sentences on Armenians at the request of the Embassies last year, it would not be fair to allow the death sentences to be executed upon Mussulmans. I have continued to press Tewfik Pasha for an official answer, but without success up to the present time.

It is more than usually difficult to get any decision from the Sultan owing to the peace negotiations.

No. 23.

Consul-General Wood to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received July 26.)

(No. 1.)
My Lord, *Tabreez, June* 21, 1897.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith the copy of a despatch I have this day addressed Her Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran, on the subject of the establishment of a Russian Ecclesiastic Mission to the Nestorians in the districts of Urumiah and Salmas.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CECIL G. WOOD.

Inclosure in No. 23.

Consul-General Wood to Mr. C. Hardinge.

(No. 2.)
Sir, *Tabreez, June* 21, 1897.

I HAVE the honour to report, for your information, that a Russian Ecclesiastic Mission passed through Tabreez, a short time ago, on its way to the south-western districts of Azerbaijan, where it is intended to establish a congregation of Nestorian converts or adherents to the Orthodox faith.

The Mission is composed of two popes, or priests, one a Russian, who is the custodian of the Orthodox Cathedral in Erivan, and the other, "Kasha" Shimoon, a Nestorian, born and educated at that place.

These religious have made it known that they would settle permanently in the districts of Urumiah and Salmast in the event of their succeeding in finding 300 Nestorians who would join the Orthodox creed.

On leaving Tabreez they directed their steps to Khoi, which town, however, owing to the absence of Nestorians, they but passed through on their way to "Jamalabad," or, as it is pronounced by the Syrians, "Jamalava," and "Gavilan," two Nestorian villages, of which the inhabitants went forth to meet them and give them welcome.

From these places they travelled towards Urmi, and were met and greeted at the "Shankarlui" Bridge, some 13 miles from that town, by the Nestorian Bishop of the plain, Mar Yonan, great numbers* of the clergy, and practically the entire Nestorian residents, among whom many "Chaldeans" (Roman Catholic Nestorians) and Presbyterian converts.

Having stayed a day or so at Urmi, receiving visits of welcome and ceremony, they left for the village of "Superghan," in the neighbourhood of the Lake of Urumiah, the residence of Mar Yonan, by whom they were accompanied.

At this place, on Thursday, the 4th instant, on the occasion of the celebration of Ascension Day (old style), the Russian priests read a declaration in the churchyard, containing the terms on which Nestorians would be admitted into the bosom of the Russo-Greek Church, and, eventually to Russia protection.

Almost 1,200 names representing, it may be said, the entire population, were signed, and among them those of many of the Nestorian clergy, headed by Mar Yonan.

At Mushabad, a village close to Superghan, they obtained, according to trustworthy report, 700 adherents, and are said to be still occupied in extending their action.

It is noteworthy that, notwithstanding the fact that the Russian Mission has not favoured, so far, the Armenian communities in those parts with its attentions, the inhabitants of Gamabat, a small Armenian village near Urmi, gathered together the church ornaments, and went out in procession to welcome them with the Nestorians on the occasion of the Nestorian demonstration at the Bridge of Shankarlui.

The addition of another religious mission† to those already existing in the districts of Urumiah and Salmas would not, at first sight, appear out of the natural sequence of things, but the unusual and prompt action taken by this Russian Mission to further their openly declared aims, by obtaining thousands of adherents to the Orthodox faith, cannot but make such as are interested in the maintenance, not of the *status quo*, as described in my despatch to you No. 1 of the 9th instant, but in the freedom and independence of this province from direct Russian control, feel somewhat anxious, and all the more so as general experience in affairs [with] Russia has shown that the missionary cloak, besides covering manifold sins, oftentimes hides the sword.

The situation presents a quaint anomaly, for we have thousands, according to report, of the Shah's Christian and most industrious subjects, who have hitherto lived in peace and perfect freedom from persecution, deliberately accepting, and this under the eyes of their native authorities, a change of their religious tenets equivalent to an abandonment of their nationality, without obtaining or making the slightest effort to obtain a single promise or guarantee for future comfort and safety.

The action of the Russian Ecclesiastic Mission to the Nestorians is a fitting corollary to the intentions and attitude taken up by my Russian colleague during the recent disturbances in Tabreez. It is needlessly provocative and deliberately insulting to the Shah's authority.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CECIL G. WOOD.

No. 24.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received July 26.)

(No. 474. Confidential.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, July* 16, 1897.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 463 of the 9th instant, respecting the appointment of Sadi Bey as Mutessarif of Ourfa, I have the honour to inclose a copy of a letter from his son, stating that he would refuse the appointment on the ground

* From 8,000 to 10,000 people.—C. G. W.

† The German Lutheran Mission, which had closed its schools, &c., some years ago, has again quite recently returned to Urumiah.—C. G. W.

of ill-health, and asking for my assistance in the event of steps being taken to force him to proceed to the post.

I may add that the appointment has been cancelled.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 24.

Reshid Sadi to Sir P. Currie.

My dear Sir P. Currie, *July* 8, 1897.

IT seems now that our turn has come. By an Imperial Iradé my father is named Mutessarif of Orfa, Vilayet of Aleppo, which is situated in the middle of a desert, and at a distance of seven days from Alexandretta.

Considering the delicate health of my father, it is impossible for him to obey the orders of the Sultan; he has asked, therefore, to retire from the Government Office and to be pensioned according to the laws of the country, which gives this right to every one who has served the Government for more than thirty years. Upon this demand my father is determined to insist until the very last degree. But as your Excellency is well aware, it is possible, and even probable, that they might pack us off with brutal force, against which no individual can resist. In such a case, could I count upon your Excellency's kind intervention in our favour? I have no time to write at greater length, but I have requested Mr. Block to see me to-morrow when I shall request to give you further details.

I need hardly add that any kindness your Excellency may show us at this difficult moment shall be remembered for life.

Believe me, &c.
(Signed) RESHID SADI.

No. 25.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received July* 26.)

(No. 475.)
My Lord, *Therapia, July* 16, 1897.

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van, complaining of the action of the local authorities in insisting on the payment of taxes on cattle imported for relief purposes.

I had some time previously obtained a promise from the Grand Vizier that he would issue orders to the Vali of Van to allow these cattle to enter free of duty, and I have accordingly instructed Mr. Block to call his Highness' attention to the failure of the Vali to carry out his instructions, and to urge that renewed orders be sent to the same effect.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 25.

Captain Elliot to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 29.)
Sir, *Van, June* 11, 1897.

I HAVE the honour to report that the Turkish authorities here have referred the question of taxing the relief cattle imported from Persia to Constantinople, and in the meanwhile have asked for a deposit at the rate of 7·2 per cent. on the cost price till the question is settled.

Before Major Williams decided to buy cattle in Persia for relief purposes, he obtained an assurance that the usual tax would, in this instance, be remitted. I was told the same by the late Vali Shemsudin Bey.

I am afraid that, unless representations are made by your Excellency to the authorities in Constantinople, that the matter will end in our having to pay.

At the present moment, when we are desirous of recommencing the purchasing of cattle, so as to distribute them in time for the ploughing for next year's crop, which commences shortly, it is inconvenient to have the sum of £ T. 70 hung up in this way.

I may mention here that the authorities are now satisfied that there is nothing wrong with the cattle at Ardjek, and have given permission for them to be distributed.

These cattle (341 in number) had been detained in Ardjek, as reported in my despatch No. 22 of the 31st May, as they were supposed to be plague-stricken. The general opinion here, however, is that the Armenian villagers of Ardjek bribed the veterinary surgeon sent out by the Government to report plague among the cattle in order that they might have the use of them for a longer period than was intended. There is no doubt that the sore feet the animals were suffering from were due to overwork.

Mr. Allen, who passed through Ardjek lately, tells me that the villagers there have not only put a very large quantity of seed into the ground for this year's crop, but have done a lot of ploughing towards the autumn sowing of next years's crop. He considered that the cattle were being worked too hard.

The detention of these cattle has been a very serious hindrance to our scheme of carrying out relief here.

I have, &c.
(Signed) G. S. ELLIOT.

No. 26.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received July* 26.)

(No. 481.)
My Lord, *Therapia, July* 22, 1897.

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a document which has been communicated to me by the Armenian Patriarch, giving an account of the proceedings of the Tokat Commission.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 26.

Memorandum communicated to Sir P. Currie by the Armenian Patriarch, July 19, 1897.

TRIBUNAL EXTRAORDINAIRE DE TOKAT.

1er *Procès, le* 17 (29) *Avril*, 1897.

UNE quinzaine d'imputés sont accusés d'avoir préparé les massacres du 7 (19) Mars, 1897, en apportant des villages des gens sans aveu, en les conservant dans leurs maisons, en les conduisant au meurtre et au pillage, et en gardant dans leurs domiciles des effets pillés, et, en outre, d'avoir tué en particulier, les nommés Kévork, Panguian, et Yéghin, le portefaix ("hamal").

Le Tribunal a prononcé les condamnations suivantes:—

A mort: Hussein Djivélég-Oglou, Halil Ourghandji, Ali Bey, Riza Elmaï-Zadé, Ibrahim Karkinli-Oglou.

A dix ans: Hadji Salih Elmaï-Zadé, Bayran Tcherkess, Batal Kurde, Hassan Chékerdji, Hassan Tchalak-Yussuf-Oglou.

A sept ans: Ahmed Cheytan.

A deux ans: Tcherkess Kemmuch-Oglou.

Les autres sont acquittés.

IIe *Procès, le* 19 *Avril* (1er *Mai*), 1897.

Trois accusés pour le meurtre des nommés Alixan, Aslanian, et Haroutiun, Etmekdjian.
Sont condamnés :—
A mort : Ibrahim Yaremakil.
A six ans : Chérif Mehmed.
A quatre ans : Ibrahim Cheikh-Ali-Oglou.

IIIe *Procès, le* 20 *Avril* (2 *Mai*), 1897.

Trois accusés pour le meurtre de Ohannes Kalpakjian.
Sont condamnés :—
A quinze ans : Midhat, de Kars.
A cinq ans : Urfan, de Kars.
Le troisième Hussein Saradj est acquitté.

IVe *Procès, le* 22 *Avril* (4 *Mai*), 1897.

Une douzaine d'accusés pour le meurtre de six Arméniens nommés.
Sont condamnés :—
A mort : Hadji Hussein Dengudj-Oglou, Redjeb Mouhadjir Odoundji, Osman Yilandji-Oglou, Nalband.
A treize ans : Hassan Chékerdji.
A dix ans : Ismaïl Khamourdji-Oglou, Hassein, fils de Leblebidji Chakir, Emmer Karagueuz-Oglou.
A cinq ans : Siddika, fille de Dengudj-Oglou.
Les autres sont acquittés.

Ve *Procès, le* 24 *Avril* (6 *Mai*), 1897.

Deux accusés pour le pillage de la boutique de l'horloger Dikran.
Est condamné :—
A trois mois : Moustafa Tchelebi-Oglou.
L'autre Ahmed Tchelebizadé est acquitté.

VIe *Procès, le* 28 *Avril* (10 *Mai*), 1897.

Vingt-neuf personnes accusées pour le meurtre de deux ecclésiastiques et de quatorze autres personnes dans le couvent et le village de Bizéri et pour la violation d'une femme et d'une fille au même village.
Sont condamnés :—
A mort : Youssouf Chirin Tcherkess, Abdullah Kurde, Tchakir Tcherkess, Ali Kel Mehmed Kel Almoush-Oglou, Khourchide Keskine-Oglou (en contumace).
A quinze ans : Youssouf Djiber.
A trois ans : dix-sept personnes, dont onze de Djindjifé, cinq de Bizéri et une de Boyalan.
Cinq autres sont acquittés.

VIIe *Procès, le* 3 (15) *Mai*, 1897.

Sont acquittés Mahmoud Nazim Pacha, ex-Mutessarif de Tokat; Husni Effendi, Major de la Gendarmerie; Ishak Bey, Premier Commissaire de Police; Mumtaz Effendi, Troisième Commissaire; Chefket Effendi, agent de police.

VIIIe *Procès, le* 5 (17) *Mai*, 1897.

Trois personnes, accusées du meurtre du cocher Manoug, sont acquittées.

IXe *Procès, le* 7 (19) *Mai*, 1897.

Six personnes, accusées du meurtre de trois Arméniens.
Sont condamnés :—
A quinze ans : Süleyman Tchcurkdji, Mehmed Ahedji.
A cinq ans : Hussein Tcheurkdji.
Les autres sont acquittés.

Xe *Procès, le* 10 (22) *Mai*, 1897.

Quatre accusés pour le meurtre de sept Arméniens sont condamnés à mort :
Abdullah Tcherkess-Chamil-Oglou, Békir Kurde Hassan-Oglou, Ibrahim Ejdar-Oglou (en contumace), Hassan Tchakir (en contumace).

XIe *Procès, le* 15 (27) *Mai*, 1897.

Dix-huit personnes, accusées du meurtre d'un ecclésiastique et de sept autres Arméniens dans l'Église des Saints Quarante à Tokat.
Sont condamnés :—
A mort : Hussein Guentch-Salih-Damadi, Ahmed Keur-Ghedir-Oglou (en contumace), Mehmed Kalaydji (en contumace).
A quinze ans : Ahmed Gurdji-Kengli.
A trois ans : Kadir Kutchuk Dor-Oglou, Kadir Beuyuk Tchekan, Mehmed Cheker-Oglou, Chukri Kara-Békir-Oglou, Hassan Ibisdi-Osman-Yegueni.
Neuf autres acquittés.
En tout sont condamnés : A mort, 22 (dont 5 en contumace); à quinze ans, 5; à treize ans, 1; à dix ans, 8; à sept ans, 1; à six ans, 1; à cinq ans, 3; à quatre ans, 1; à trois ans, 22; à deux ans, 1; à trois mois, 1.
Sont portés devant le Tribunal les meurtres de 46 individus et le pillage d'une boutique, de sorte qu'ils seraient encore à traiter les meurtres de 82 individus et les pillages d'un couvent, d'une église, et de 300 boutiques et maisons.

No. 27.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received July* 26.)

(No. 482.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, July* 22, 1897.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith copy of a despatch I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Kharput, suggesting that measures should be taken to obviate the necessity of obtaining a permit in each separate case for the rebuilding of Christian churches and schools destroyed during the late disturbances.

I communicated Mr. Fontana's despatch privately to the Armenian Patriarch, who had already received reports from Anatolia on the same subject.

It appears that the Armenian Patriarchate has recently addressed a takrir to the competent Department requesting the Sublime Porte to grant a general permission for the rebuilding of these churches and schools, and quoting as a precedent the Iradé issued exempting from every formality and taxation the owners of real property who wished to rebuild or repair their houses destroyed by the earthquake in 1894.

The demand of the Armenian Patriarchate has been referred to the Council of State, and a list is being drawn up for presentation to the Sublime Porte of the religious and educational buildings which Mgr. Ormanian desires to include in the general permission applied for.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 27.

Vice-Consul Fontana to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 30.)

Kharput, June 28, 1897.

Sir,

I HAVE the honour herewith to transmit extract from a letter addressed to me upon the subject of the right of foreign or native Christians in this vilayet to rebuild or repair, without special permission to that effect, schools or churches belonging to them which were destroyed or dismantled during the recent disturbances.

The local authorities appear to insist, however unreasonably, that such permission must be obtained before the work of reconstruction can be allowed to proceed.

The building of a Christian school or church in Turkey is dependent upon the express authorization of the Sultan. Should that school or church be subsequently destroyed in the course of events, which His Majesty and the Sublime Porte profess to deprecate and to deplore, it is only reasonable to expect that its reconstruction should be in every way encouraged and expedited by the Sovereign, if only as a proof of the abhorrence with which he regards wanton and disloyal destruction of property, founded, so to say, upon his own Imperial courtesy and command; and that he should consequently issue Circular Instructions to his Representatives, the provincial Governors-General, that no renewed licence shall be required for the rebuilding or repair of any edifice illegally and rebelliously destroyed by certain of his misguided subjects in direct defiance of his own supreme will, and to the erection and existence of which he had once and for all graciously signified his sovereign consent.

As this question—if it can be so termed—may be one of general as well as of local interest, I would venture to submit it for the earnest consideration of your Excellency.

I have, &c.

(Signed) RAPHAEL A. FONTANA.

Inclosure 2 in No. 27.

Extract from Letter addressed to Vice-Consul Fontana.

. . . . . IT seems to me of great importance that a general order should be sent out by the Sublime Porte to the effect that permission be given for rebuilding all churches, schools, and dwelling-houses which were destroyed in the disturbances of 1895 and 1896. This would show that the Government does not approve of the work of destruction, and it would be of great value to many communities. Now, in some cases, the difficulty of obtaining permission to rebuild delays the work so long that walls which might have been used are destroyed by the weather, and communities are left destitute of church and school privileges.

In many cases local officials take advantage of the destruction of churches ad schools to hinder the work of Christian communities. . . . . .

Kharput, June 10, 1897.

No. 28.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received August 2.)

(No. 500.)

(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, August* 2, 1897, 10·10 A.M.

HER Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van telegraphed yesterday as follows:—

"Does your Excellency approve of my accepting an invitation from the Russian Vice-Consul at Van to accompany him to the manœuvres of Russian troops, which will take place about three weeks hence on the Turkish frontier."

Has your Lordship any objection?

No. 27*.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received July 26.)

(No. 485.)

My Lord. *Therapia, July* 22, 1897.

IN view of the pressing need for the distribution of relief in the coming winter in the Vilayets of Van and Bitlis, I have sanctioned a proposal of Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at the latter place to meet Captain Elliot on the Van border to confer on the subject; he will start on this journey to-day. Mr. Crow reports that refugees from the Hekkiari are flocking into his district, and he has also heard serious reports of the condition of Christians in parts which have not been visited, and where relief is being much obstructed by Kurds. I have, therefore, approved of his proceeding to Akhlat and Khizan after his meeting with Captain Elliot, to ascertain what truth there is in these reports.

I have also authorized Captain Elliot to visit the regions round Lake Van in order to inform himself as to the condition of things existing in those districts.

I have, &c.

(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

No. 29.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received August 3.)

(No. 488.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, July* 24, 1897.

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van, reporting on the occurrence at Diz in the Hekkiari district towards the end of May last.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 29.

Captain Elliot to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 32.)
Sir, *Van, July* 6, 1897.

I HAVE the honour to make the following Report on the occurrence at Diz in the latter end of May, about which I telegraphed to your Excellency on the 3rd June.

On the 22nd or 23rd May, zaptiehs from Julamerk seized the bridge across the Lab, opposite to where the Valley of Diz joins that of the Lab. The Valley of Diz is occupied by the Nestorian Ashiret of that name. The effect of this action was to cut off the people of Diz from their flocks which were across the river. The object of it was to get arrears of tribute out of the people of Diz. Both the time and the manner of it were unusual. The custom is to demand the tribute in October when the people, having sold their produce, may be expected to have money by them, and further, to give notice, before collecting tribute, to Mar Shimun, who deputes one of his men to attend. On this occasion, Mar Shimun was not informed of the intention to collect tribute till two days after the zaptiehs had occupied the bridge of Diz.

When the bridge was seized, some Diz men went down to protest. They sat down and talked with the zaptiehs, and supplied them with food. One of the zaptiehs sent word to Julamerk that they were being fired on. The next day, accordingly, the Kaïmakam, Cadi, and Mudayimum came down to Diz with troops, and a following of Kurds from Julamerk.

The Diz people met them at the bridge, and a parley ensued. The Diz men got alarmed at the attitude of the officials, and began to make off. The troops were ordered to fire by the Kaïmakam, but as I have reported elsewhere, they took care to hit no one. The Julamerk Kurds, however, did their best, and some men got bullets through their clothes, but no one was hurt by the firing. Three children were, however, drowned in a torrent by falling from a bridge as they fled in terror up the valley.

Some of the Diz men returned the fire as they retreated, and one of the officials got a bullet through his sleeve.

Diz was then occupied, and £T. 500 was demanded. Eventually 1,055 sheep, 37 cattle, £T. 24, and various other articles were taken, and the people of Diz left in a state of destitution.

This act has aroused indignation and sympathy not only amongst the Christians, but also among the better disposed of their Mahommedan neighbours.

On hearing of it from Mr. Browne I went and saw the Acting Governor. He immediately telegraphed to Julamerk, and dismissed the Kaïmakam and the Mudayimum, and ordered their successors to start without delay. This prompt action very probably averted very serious trouble as the Ashirets were on the verge of despair and thought no resource was left them but to die with arms in their hands. It appears too, that serious measures were in contemplation against the other Ashirets, and even Kochanes.

These have now been abandoned.

Mar Shimun has all along used his influence with the Ashirets to keep them quiet. The announcement that the Order of the Osmanli, 2nd class, was on its way

to him, and a telegram of congratulation he received from the Acting Governor, Shemshi Pasha, could not fail to have a good effect.

I met the Mudayinum at Bashkala. I believe him to be honest and energetic, but he is too hasty and inexperienced for a place like Hokkiari. He appears to be not more than twenty-five years of age.

Mr. Browne says that he afterwards, when he understood the wrong that had been done, saved the Diz Maliks from further bullying by the Kaïmakam.

The zaptiehs were Kurds from Julamerk. There is a very strong hostile feeling between the Nestorians and the Julamerk people, and the employment of these zaptiehs for coercing the Christians is always likely to lead to disturbances.

I have, &c.
(Signed) G. S. ELLIOT.

No. 30.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received August 3.*)

(No. 489.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, July 24, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Mersina, reporting the satisfactory state of the weaving relief works at Hadjin.

The Armenian Relief Committee has already granted a further sum of 200*l.* towards this enterprise.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 30.

Major Massy to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 68.)
Sir, *Adana, July 9, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to inform your Excellency that the information just received from Hadjin gives excellent accounts of the weaving works which we have been able to establish in that town with the relief funds which your Excellency was so good as to obtain for me for that purpose. All progresses favourably, the material turned out is of good quality, and is gradually establishing a market for itself. Lately a merchant from Azizieh ordered a large quantity, preferring it to that made at Marash. We are going to establish looms at Shahr and at other villages so as to gradually absorb all the Christian labour which is unemployed in the district.

I feel sure that your Excellency, as well as the members of the Relief Fund Committee, will be pleased to hear this good result, and I trust I may be in a position to send continued good accounts as time goes on, especially if we can obtain the further sum of £T. 200 asked for in order to insure the complete success of this enterprise.

I have, &c.
(Signed) P. H. H. MASSY.

No. 31.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received August 3.*)

(No. 490.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, July 26, 1897.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 412 of the 2nd July, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from

Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van, giving a report of his journey in the Hekkiari district.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 31.

Captain Elliot to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 31.)
Sir, *Van, July 4, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to report my return from Hekkiari on the 2nd instant.

I have visited Kochanes, where I spent three days, and had several interviews with Mar Shimun and other leading men of the Nestorians. Mr. Browne, of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Mission, was of great assistance in interpreting into Syriac for me, and kindly accompanied me for this purpose to Diza, in Gavur, Khumaroo, and Bashkala, from which place he returned to Kochanes and I to Van. Mr. Browne has also supplied me with various information about the Nestorians, which I beg to inclose with my despatch No. 33. I am greatly indebted to him for what he has done to help me.

I visited Moussa Bey at Khumaroo. I was wrong in my despatch No. 24 of the 1st June in stating that this man had a reputation but little deserved of protecting Christians. I confounded him with another Kurd of the same name, who lives near Gaviehegan. This man has saved many lives, and has drawn down on himself in consequence a lot of unpleasantness, and incurred no little risk. I had some difficulty at first in obtaining an interview with him, as the Kaïmakam of Shemdidan, Noori Bey, who happened to be on a visit to Khumaroo, told off a police officer to attend him. On the day after my arrival, however, the Kaïmakam, the Officer Commanding a detachment of troops at Khumaroo, the police officer, and Moussa Bey came to call. When they had taken their leave and were mounting their horses, I called Moussa Bey back, and invited him to stay longer. The others could not do so without being impolite, and after this Moussa Bey was free to come as much as he liked. I mention this incident to show the distrust with which Moussa Bey is regarded by the Government.

At Kochanes I found the Metropolitan (Matran or Archbishop) of the Nestorians still there, living in Mar Shimun's house, and afraid to venture far from the village. His church and diocese are at Mar Isha, in Sheradiman, in Turkey, but he dare not live there for fear of Sheikh Sadig, who has made several attempts on his life. His family are in Baludan, Tergavar, Persia, and he obtained, some time ago, permission from the Turkish Government to join them there, but has hitherto been afraid to leave Kochanes, as he heard that Sheikh Sadig had men on the watch for him to kill him. I suggested his coming with me, and he seemed glad to avail himself of the opportunity. At Diza (in Gavur) the Kaïmakam undertook to see him safely over the frontier, and, as he seemed perfectly at ease in his mind, I left him to the care of the Government. On his arrival at Diza with me some soldiers of the garrison came up to him and said they were glad to see him. Sheikh Sadig is not liked, and I looked on this as an indication of the feeling against him, and sympathy with those he has persecuted.

I may mention here that the Nestorians seem to entertain a high opinion of, and feel great confidence in, the Turkish regular troops. In the Diz affair, about which I telegraphed to your Excellency, the soldiers, when ordered to fire on the villagers, purposely fired wide of them, and the officer in command declined to order his men to direct their fire better, though urged to do so by the civil officials. I was told this by a Diz Malik and some villagers who were present. They also say that when soldiers are sent to collect taxes they take no more than the assessment, and refrain from oppressive behaviour. It is a pleasure to record this testimony in favour of the Turkish soldier, whom I have always regarded as most patient and subordinate.

The frontier is being watched by detachments of troops and Hamidieh cavalry, and I was told that the Kurds in the summer pastures are keeping together in larger camps than usual as a precaution against attack by Armenian revolutionists.

A party of fifty Shikak Kurds from Persian territory crossed the border and carried off all the sheep from Kotrannes, a Nestorian village about 40 miles inside

the frontier. They were intercepted on their return, and had to abandon the sheep, which were, I believe, restored to their owners.

The Shikaks, instead of returning to Persia, remained in Turkish territory, and waylaid and robbed travellers. The day I reached Diza on my return from Khumaroo they robbed and stripped five Turkish Kurds, leaving them nearly naked, and the next night they carried off some mules from the village near which I camped. This seems to be an ordinary occurrence on this frontier, as, during my former journey, much the same sort of thing happened.

The patience of the Turkish Government in matters of this sort seems somewhat surprising.

I am making the affair at Diz, the general condition of the Nestorians, and the question of Sheikh Sadig the subject of separate Reports.

I have, &c.
(Signed) G. S. ELLIOT.

No. 32.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received August 3.)

(No. 491.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, July 26, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van, giving an interesting Report on the present condition of the Nestorians in Turkey.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 32.

Captain Elliot to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 33.)
Sir, *Van, July 6, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to submit the following Report on the general condition of the Nestorians of Turkey, together with the following inclosures:—

1. An outline map of the Nestorian country.

2. Notes on Nestorian titles, &c., by the Rev. W. H. Browne (Archbishop of Canterbury's Mission).

3. A tabular statement of losses and outrages suffered by the Nestorians, compiled by Mr. Browne at my request.

Before the last war between Turkey and Russia the relations between Turks and Christians in Hekkiari were very good. Since that time they have gradually become unsatisfactory.

When Behri Pasha became Vali of Van matters speedily began to be intolerable. The high-handedness and systematic oppression of this official everywhere filled the Christians, Nestorian and Armenian alike, with dread. The universal impression is that he meant to make existence impossible for them. The impunity enjoyed by the authors of the Armenian massacres, and the belief prevalent among Christians and Kurds that an Imperial Firman to massacre the former had gone forth, has within the last two years produced a state of affairs that cannot much longer be put up with. Inclosure No. 3 gives some sort of idea of what this is.

This by no means includes everything that has happened during the period referred to in the statement. Nor does it take account of such minor exactions and outrages as for instance are committed by individual Kurds who come to a village and demand a present. If they do not get what they want they avenge themselves sooner or later by setting hay-ricks on fire or doing similar damage.

It is not to be supposed that the Nestorian Ashirets are guiltless of raids on their part. These, however, are usually in retaliation for losses inflicted on them, and are not to be compared with what they suffer. Moreover, they complain that the Government is prompt enough to take repressive measures against them, but allows Kurdish offenders to go unpunished.

They also complain that the roads are not safe for them to take their produce to market, and hence they find it hard to raise money to pay their tribute.

The constant harassing they have endured would before now have driven the Ashiret, who are the only armed Christians in this vilayet into rebellion, were it not that Mar Shimun has exerted all his influence in exhorting them to be patient, and to hope for a fair hearing and justice from the Government. Mr. Browne has greatly assisted Mar Shimun by good advice and encouragement, and there can be no doubt but that his presence at Kochanes has been and is most beneficial. Mar Shimun's task, nevertheless, is a difficult one. His cousins are always employed in intriguing against him, and since the time of Behri Pasha they seem to have been encouraged by the Government officials, who do not give him the support he has a right to expect. I believe the intention of sending Russian priests to Kochanes is due to intrigues on the part of those who wish to embarrass Mar Shimun. He claims that if he is properly supported by the Government in dealing with his own people, and that if the Kurds are kept from molesting them and the roads to the markets rendered safe, he will keep the Ashirets quiet and get them to pay their tribute.

As regards the Russian priests they had not arrived at Kochanes when I was there. Mar Shimun and the Mutran (Archbishop) assured Mr. Browne most strongly that they had no wish or intention to give up their church and become orthodox.

On leaving Bashkala I met a priest on the road who, I hear, is a Nestorian by birth but a Russian subject, and of the Orthodox Church. He way on his way to Kochanes, ostensibly to visit relations there, but he had stayed a week in Van with the Russian Consul, and £ T. 150 from the Credit Lyonnais had been waiting for him in Van. I believe him to be one of two Russian priests that met with a most enthusiastic reception from the Nestorians in Urmia a few weeks back.

The Nestorians are now in a very despondent condition. They seem to consider matters to be about as bad as can possibly be endured, and that before long they will have no resource but to abandon their religion or emigrate. Many have already left, and some once prosperous villages are entirely deserted. Thanks greatly to Mr. Browne's friendly help and advice they still retain a hope that better times are coming. If disappointed in this they look forward to nothing better than their extinction as a separate people and church. They told me that their hopes were placed on England's influence being exerted on their behalf. I impressed on them that all I could do was to lay the state of their case before your Excellency, and warned them against being too sanguine.

I have spoken to Shemshi Pasha about the state of affairs in Hekkiari, and urged the importance of supporting Mar Shimun's authority and exiling Sheikh Sadig. I have great confidence in Shemshi Pasha's will and ability to put things on a proper footing throughout this vilayet. He has, as is inevitable when a man does his duty in this country, made enemies, and I fear their intrigues may prove too much for him eventually, unless he is supported by the Porte.

I have, &c.
(Signed) G. S. ELLIOT.

Inclosure 2 in No. 32.

Notes on Nestorian Titles, supplied by the Rev. W. H. Browne.

Ecclesiastical.

1. THE Patriarch ("Patriarch of the Church of the East"). "Catholicos" is his more ancient and lower title. Mar Shimun his dynastic name. Every prelate signs his name by his Christian name, followed by his dynastic title, as European prelates by the name of their sees.

2. The Mutran or Metrapolita (Metropolitan). There is now only one in Kurdistan, who resides in Shemdinan (Shemisdin). Mar Khanisho is his dynastic name.

(This is the Archbishop referred to in these despatches).

3. Episcopa, Bishop, usually spoken of as Abuna (father) in Turkey, and Mamu (uncle) in Persia.

These three names are spoken of and written to as Mar (My Lord) followed by the Apostolic name. "Mar" is also used before the name of a saint, and thus a church is often named, and from it the village in which it stands.

4. Correspondence.—Correspondence in Nestorian English Archdeacon.

5. Archdeacon, correspondence nearly in Dean. He is addressed and spoken of as Kasha with his Christian name.

6. Kasha or Cashisha is "priest."

7. Shamasha is "deacon."

8. Hamalaiton is "sub-deacon."

9. Carozo is "reader."

As present Corepiscopi, Mapolitan and Carozi are practically obsolete. The Jewish grade of holy orders is that of Shamasha.

Speaker Notes:

Ashirets. There are five Christian Ashirets (tribes). They pay no taxes but fighting, as set down fixed by the Turkish Government. Their names are Baz, Tela, Diz, Tyari and Tchanes.

The Ashirets Missions are appointed by Mar Shimun. They, or sometimes Mar Shimun, appoint the Reis (headman) of each village in their district.

The Ashirets are armed, but chiefly with fine-locks. They have a good reputation for courage, and in spite of their inferior numbers and weapons they generally hold their own against the Kurds.

The Reis (Kasha) are the Christians who pay taxes. Some of them still have Malliks, and some of them have guns, as those of Ayal and Mar Shisha, on the Persian frontier east of Gawar. Neither one of my real accounts.

[1741] (4)

Inclosure 3 in No. 32.

List of some of the Raids and Murders committed by Kurds on Nestorians in Hekkiari between the Spring of 1896 and the end of the Spring of 1897, from information supplied by various Witnesses.

No.	Date.	Name of District.	Village.	Nature of Outrage.	By whom committed.	Action taken.	Result.	Remarks.
1	July and August 1896	Diz	Shemasha and Gulnzur	Raid on the sheep; 2,700 were carried off and one man killed	Urumar Kurds	Representations by Major Williams, R.A., then Her Britannic Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van, to the Vali or Acting Vali	Promise from Saad-ed-Din Pasha to attend to it, made in 1896, but still unfulfilled	These losses were not allowed as a plea for exemption from taxes in part, these villages have no right of their quota to the demands of the Government in the raid under Government auspices mentioned below (No. 3).
2	Ditto	Diz	Aqusi and Saramus	Attempt to carry off the sheep ..	Ditto	.. ..	.. ..	
3	May 1897 ..	Diz	All the villages of Diz	At an unusual time of the year, and without any notice of intention to ask for the usual tribute, the house of entry into Diz was seized by soldiers and captains, and some shots were fired by them at Diz men who came to parley. Next day shots were fired round the Diz sheep gangs on this side the river, terrifying the women and children, and at each of Diz until a few were fired in return. 1,055 sheep, 37 cattle, 5 carpets, 5 rathrons, more than £T.21 in money; 11 fine locks guns, wearing apparel, &c., were taken, with blows and threats and abominable language	The Acting Kaimakam and the Mudeyinum and the Cadi of Julamerk, with troops and a rabble of Kurks of Julamerk. The Julamerk Kurds probably misinformed and misled the responsible officials	Her Britannic Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van spoke to the Vali, and telegraphed to Her Britannic Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople	The two responsible officials were dismissed by the Vali of Van; and similar attacks threatened against Gulshanis (Kochannes) and Tyaris have not been made	The Mudeyinum, after his first manner, protected the Diz Christians the last Bath of the Ramazan. The manner of the attack was such as to excite fear that the Nestorian Ashirets were to be forced by any means to lose the patience they have displayed, and to be compelled into constructive opposition to the Government. It spoke well for Mar Shimun's influence with his people that panic did not lead to a general rising. The result on Diz is widespread hunger looking to illness, and flight from fruitless homes.
4	March 1896 ..	Between Julamerk and Tyari	Geo	410 sheep, 100 felt druggets for sledging in, 2 loads of honey, &c., were carried off. Some women were violated	Julamerk Kurks accompanying tax collectors. The soldiers were quite orderly	.. ..		There was in this case an excuse that the taxes were unpaid, but this and the following (4) were due to intrigues of the Julamerk Kurds, trying to lose the Christian Ashirets to commit some act of violence which should lead to their being attacked by the Government.

No.	Date.	District.	Village.	Nature of Outrage.	By whom committed.	Action taken.	Result.	Remarks
5	March 1896	Between Julamerk and Diz	Erik ..	300 head of sheep taken ..	Julamerk Kurds and Tax collectors	.. ..	.. ..	
6	1896 ..	Tal	Rabbat	24 mules carried off; 1 man killed	Hassan Agha of Barnashin	.. ..	.. ..	
7	1896	Tal	Mutwyi	9 mules taken	In Mergil Village ..	.. ..	.. ..	
8	[illegible] 1896 ..	Tal	Barlan	300 sheep raided	Julamerk Kurds	Representations to the Mutasarif of Julamerk and the Vali of Van	Promises made, but unfulfilled. Latterly they were taken by Government as a set-off against their taxes, which, however, do not seem to have been diminished	
9	January 1897 ..	Tal	Ermatur and Shawrotha	Everything in the houses, as well as sheep and breakfast, looted	Chamar Kurds of Sutu ..	.. ..	.. ..	
11	August 1896 ..	.. ..	Rudshad (Kerdishan)	Raid of 100 sheep	Zeidi Kurds, with Hajji Agha, of the Artushi nomad Kurds	Representations by Mar Shimun to the Government	Promise by the Vali to recover the sheep. Still unfulfilled	This is the first time for many years that the Patriarch's own village was attacked. His own sheep were purposely spared on this occasion.
13	June 1897 ..	.. ..	Qudshanis ..	Sheep driven from their own summer pasture that the Kurds may occupy them. Water-courses broken so that corn shall perish	Julamerk Kurds	Mar Shimun informed Kaimakam of Julamerk	Pending	This year Kurdish insolence and injury are to know no limit. This action is interpreted also as another of the efforts of the Julamerk Kurds to provoke the Christian Athiret's reaction. The inaction or inertion of the Government will go to dissipate or confirm the idea that Nestorians are outside the protection of the law.
14	June 1896 ..	Gawar	Bigoush	Raid in full view of the Government post of Diz of Gawar. Two men killed in cold blood. The [illegible] were stripped of their [illegible] Six furniture, and clothes were [illegible]	Persian Shikak Kurds, with the connivance of local Turkish Kurds. Later one of their Chiefs and their Sheikh or Shaikh Sadik, the brother of the Persian	Representations by Mar Shimun and others to the Government of Van and Shakir Pasha. Flight of most [illegible] to Persia [illegible] autumn	Ineffectual attacks by Persian troops on the Shikak Kurds	This village is Mar Shimun's patrimonial property. His means of subsistence are almost entirely gone through the loss of these tenants and their produce, having been already crippled by the delays of his stipend from the Imperial Government, and by the devastation (by Kurds) of Albeq, Ramin, Gawar, Serai, &c., from whence he had ecclesiastical dues.
15	July 1896 ..	Tyari, in Kanash-Tamkh of Gawar	Martikan [illegible] Pagi, and Tyal	[illegible] carried off. Attacks on the villages and on the fugitives. Five men killed. Property carried off	Persian Shikak Kurds (said to be instigated by Sheikh Sadik)	Representations to Government. Flight of all the inhabitants to Persia	Ineffectual attacks on Shikak Kurds by Persian Government	The village is the property of the Patriarch. Tyari is the C.E. Government Government and its officials by taxes and by extortions, and trick played on the receipt papers and account books.
16	Spring 1896 ..	Lower Tyari ..	Ashitha	700 sheep raided	Gawar and Sindai Kurds ..	.. ..	.. ..	
17	Ditto	Ditto	Gawar	100 sheep raided	Reshid Bey, of Berwari Kurds	.. ..	.. ..	
18	June 1896 ..	Upper Tyari ..	Bardi	Sheep carried off, leaving eleven houses to starve	Artushi Kurds	.. ..	.. ..	
19	Ditto	Ditto	Dudosh	Sheep of five houses raided ..	Ditto	.. ..	.. ..	
20	[illegible] 1896 ..	Lewin	Arkel	Village raided, and part of it burnt. The Church of St. George was also robbed by [illegible]	Ditto	Tyari [illegible] Vali to [illegible] the Government of [illegible] Kurd [illegible] of Lewin, took a few cattle, and burnt the house of the man who had led the Artushi Kurds to the Tyari sheep pasture	Telegram from Vali to Mar Shimun to quiet Tyari. Some battalions of troops were sent to recover the spoils taken by Tyari. No recovery of goods taken from Tyari. A few soldiers remaining in Lewin saved the Christian villages from the usual plundering of the Kurds	That troops could be so quickly moved to redress a trifling raiding done by Christians to Kurks, while seldom is any redress given to Christians, increased the impression that Christians are to be allowed to be obliterated at the will of the Kurds. This adds to Kurdish lawlessness.
10	About May 1897	Lower Tyari ..	Ashitha	Sheep of thirty houses raided, and [illegible] raided	Duzik Kurds	.. ..	.. ..	
20	Spring 1897 ..	Ditto	.. ..	One flock of sheep carried off ..	Reshid Bey, Berwari Kurd			The Sheikh of Barnashi is declared to have instigated Reshid Bey (Mira of Berwari Kurds and Mudir of the district), Sadi Agha (Mudir of Gial), and Hassan Agha.
21	Ditto	Ditto	.. ..	Sheep carried off. Two men and one woman killed	Sadi Agha, Agha of Gial, Pinyanish Kurd	Sent to Mir Shimun to ask Vali to send a Commission to see how they are treated	.. ..	
24	Ditto	Ditto	.. ..	Two flocks of sheep carried off. One man killed, one wounded	Hassan Agha, of Barnashin			These four items are given by men of Lower Tyari and by Kurds and Christians of Berwari districts.
27	May 25, 1897 ..	Ditto	Halmund ..	Two men killed in Berwari district	Reshid Bey, Berwari Kurd			
24	1896	Albeq	Six villages ..	Cattle and sheep raided; corn, [illegible] destroyed	Persian Shikak Kurds, with the connivance of the local Kurds	Representations to Shakir Pasha, Said-ed-Din Pasha, and the Vali of Van, by letter from Mar Shimun of August 1896	Single protection was given to the inhabitants who remained	
25	Spring 1896 ..	Nedur	Marwanan ..	Nearly all the goods of the village carried off, and the population fled to other districts	Shedan Kurds	Representations as in No. 24 ..	A good deal of the spoil was restored by the Government to the villagers, who returned to their village	

No.	Date.	Name of District.	Village.	Nature of Outrage.	By whom committed.	Action Taken.	Result.
25	Summer 1896	Bozan, near Gaul-dere (Cheshire)	Tremil	140 head of sheep	Zeitan Kurds		
26	Sept.	Mamelmai	Sara	Village raided. Sheep and cattle and household goods carried off	Ashirer Kurds in the neighbourhood	Petitions from about 400 Christians were affixed. Perhaps more now done	
27	Sept.	Berwar (near Kochanis)	Several villages	Raided again and again			

The above are by no means the only cases of outrages I am aware of, but, as this paper is compiled in haste, I have not had time to get particulars. Action has been taken in many other of the cases here noted, but there is not time now to recover their details, nor to add some other particulars which have been omitted from fear of inaccuracy. Where has been written above does not, I believe, err on the side of exaggeration.

(Signed) W. H. BROWNE. *Priest of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Mission to the Assyrian Christians.*

Qudshanis, June 24, 1897.

Inclosure 4 in No. 32.

Sketch Map.

[Not printed.]

No. 33.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received August 3.*)

(No. 493.)

My Lord, *Therapia, July 26, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith a Report from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Adana on the present state of that vilayet.

I beg to call your Lordship's attention to the improved condition of the Vilayet of Adana and to the good effect produced by the presence of Major Massy, whose activity and zeal are worthy of all praise, and who appears to have shown much tact in the exercise of his difficult duties.

I have, &c.

(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 33.

Major Massy to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 60.)

Sir, *Adana, July 9, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to report to your Excellency that the state of affairs in this vilayet may be considered favourable in comparison with that which prevailed here about this period last year.

Your Excellency will recall my frequent reports of lawless acts on the part of Government officials towards Christians of all classes—women sent under force to Constantinople, other girls seized by soldiers and detained by force, rumours of disturbances at Hadjin, Consular seals violated at the Mersina landing-stage, lamentable state of Shahr and poverty of its inhabitants, Christian girl detained by the Imaum of Adana—in fact, constantly recurring acts which were a shame to this country, and which made me feel, at times, the futility of my endeavours to save the Government from itself, so to speak. At the same time I was aware that these foolish officials looked upon me as an enemy because I endeavoured to act in the interests of justice to both Christian and Moslem, as cases came before me.

After a continuous residence at my post of eighteen months, during which time I have journeyed over the whole of my province and many parts of the Aleppo Vilayet, I have much pleasure in recording a marked change for the better in every matter where I have been able to exercise my influence.

Thus, the Government officials have learnt to understand that I am always ready to take up any act of injustice, and to see it through when once begun; that I am perfectly well informed of all that passes in the vilayet, and that all who are aggrieved, be they Moslem or Christian, come to me for redress and to no other Consul.

Thanks to your Excellency's support, for which I beg to tender my most respectful thanks, and to the dismissal of the late Vali and other offending officials, my position has been so strengthened that I do not hesitate to say that I am really feared by the Government functionaries, who consequently do their utmost now to satisfy my demands, or to prevent the occurrence of lawless acts which they feel sure would reach my ears.

Although this position increases my duties very much—my Consulate being seldom free from visitors, who require some redress or assistance, all day long—it is with a sense of the greatest pleasure that I endeavour to perform my somewhat difficult, onerous, and responsible duties—some one being, doubtless, on the look out to trip me up—as I feel a personal satisfaction at any good result which I can obtain.

I now seldom meet with any opposition at the hands of Government officials. The Mutessarif of Mersina, who continues to evince every desire to do his duty, and who is a very superior Turkish official, endeavours always to make my duties lighter, and accepts my representations on all subjects in good part.

The Vali, Hussein Hilmi Bey, has shown a friendly spirit so far, although he has to receive a few lessons before he quite understands my manner of looking upon the injustice of Turkish rule. I have no reason to anticipate, however, that we are likely to cease to be friendly, and I am careful to exercise tact in my dealings with all officials, who, unlike our late Vali, prove themselves worthy of any consideration.

As a result of what I have just recorded, I have much pleasure in informing your Excellency that the general state of Christian affairs is far more satisfactory than it was, and I hope I may be right in saying that the improvement compares favorably with that which has taken place in any other vilayet during the past eighteen months. This is the opinion expressed to me by all classes of European residents. Lately, a Christian Armenian teacher visited the Rev. Dr. T. D. Christie, of Tarsous, from the Marash district, and said that it was like coming to heaven to come into our vilayet.

The material prosperity of the Christian population has also increased, and prospects for the future are favourable. At Hadjin the town population is again almost self-supporting, while the villages should have good crops this year—all this from the relief distributed from our foreign relief money. At Fekké, Sis, Kars Bazar, Adana, and at other places, prospects also look fairly well. The least bright is the Payas district, but that, also, has improved, and one cannot pay implicit heed to all reports, as I am aware that many discontented Armenians live there and endeavour to keep alive the smouldering, or half-extinguished, embers of the late Armenian rising.

I trust that your Excellency will not think that I have been endeavouring to praise my own acts in this report. My desire has been only to record the facts as they would be represented by any other impartial person, as I feel sure your Excellency will be pleased that my presence here should be beneficial in preserving order and improving the relations between the Government and the Christian population of this province.

I have, &c.
(Signed) P. H. H. MASSY

No. 34

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received August 5.)

(No. 295.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, July 20, 1897.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 126 of the 30th ultimo, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copies of two despatches which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Bitlis, reporting further respecting the Kurdish disturbances in the Bitlis Vilayet.

I am making representations to the Porte on this subject.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 34.

Vice-Consul Crow to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 18.)
Sir, *Bitlis, July 3, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to return herewith the Memorandum transmitted to me in your Excellency's despatch of the 1st June, communicating information received from the Grand Vizier with reference to the attack of the Modeki Kurds on gendarmes, and stating that troops would be sent to punish the offenders.

My despatches Nos. 14 and 17 of the 25th May and 6th June, and my telegram No. 47 of the 27th instant, will have acquainted your Excellency with the further development of events in the disturbed district.

So far from troops having been sent to chastise the Kurds, the greater part of the military force has been withdrawn from Bitlis, and there are now only 200 men left in the whole sandjak, while the small number in Bitlis itself would be insufficient even to protect the town if the Kurds attacked it. Such a contingency is, however, improbable, though the Modeki Kurds have been sufficiently active in the neighbourhood to frighten the inhabitants and to lead them to believe that an attack was intended. The Armenian village of Markok, one hour distant from Bitlis, was plundered, caravans on the Saird road were robbed close to the town, and others, fearing to approach, remained at Ziaret. Armenian villagers from the Modeki district fled to the town, and large numbers of men, women, and children remained here some days in a destitute condition, fearing to return to their homes.

There was, I think, more alarm than actual plundering in Modeki itself, though four villages have, according to an Armenian account, been pillaged. Peaceful counsels have at length prevailed among the Kurds, and the Armenians, at the latter's invitation, have now returned to their villages.

Shortly after my departure, the Deputy Kaïmakam and the members of the Local Government, finding their position untenable in Modeki, and being terrified at the threats of the Kurds, withdrew again to Bitlis, and I hear that there is no immediate prospect of their resuming their duties.

I do not think the Mushir of the 12th Army Corps is justified in throwing the whole blame of the occurrence on the Vali, though the forcible collection of a larger sheep tax than was warranted by the number of animals may be open to adverse criticism, and is at least likely to create opposition where the tax-payers are Kurds; but he should not base his disapproval on the fact that the Vali did not send a sufficiently strong force in the first instance. Under the present system, his Excellency cannot use the troops without the permission of the Mushir, and Zeki Pasha is averse to using them against Kurds. As an instance of the length to which this aversion is sometimes carried, and which effectually checks all co-operation between military and civil authorities, I may mention that the late Kaïmakam of Modeki, on finding his position serious, called on the troops stationed in his Kaïmakam to use their arms, but the latter replied that they could not empty their rifles on the Kurds without direct orders from the Mushir, and so the Kaïmakam was murdered with the troops, so to speak, within a stone's throw.

The theory enunciated by Zeki Pasha that rebellious Kurds can be repressed by zaptiehs is puerile, but, under the circumstances, the Vali was obliged to conform to his opinion, and utilize the means at his disposal. His Excellency accordingly sent first gendarmes, who were killed, and then the very inadequate force allowed him by the Mushir, with the result that the Colonel in command assumed the responsibility of returning to Bitlis, in order to avoid the extermination of the whole force, which would inevitably have attended his advance.

If Zeki Pasha holds that the Vali should take stronger measures, it is a matter of some surprise that he should put all means of coercion out of the latter's reach at a moment when he stands in the greatest need of support.

I have, &c.
(Signed) FRANCIS EDWARD CROW.

Inclosure 2 in No. 34.

Vice-Consul Crow to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 19.)
Sir, *Bitlis, July 4, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to confirm my telegram of the 2nd instant, reporting to your Excellency that serious Kurdish disturbances had taken place and still continued to occur in this district.

On the 13th June at Ourdah, an Armenian village near Bitlis, on the eastern shores of the Van Lake, the men of Sheikh Jelaladdin, a Kurdish Chief of Khizan, put their animals to graze in the villagers' fields. The latter very properly resisted in order to save their crops, whereupon the Kurds killed Badao Dadigian and wounded Andne and Bedros Seferian, Armenian peasants. Information was given to the Government, and four Kurds were arrested and taken to Bitlis. On this, Jelaladdin informed the village that if the release of these men was not immediately effected he

would take summary vengeance on the inhabitants, and I hear that, in consequence of these threats, the villagers have interceded on the murderers behalf.

On the 23rd June the Armenian villagers of Zagagh in Akhlat sent their cattle to Jut Nimrood to graze. The Hassananli Hamidieh Kurds of Rejak Aghei attacked them and carried off ninety-five cows, which are all they possess. Information was given to the Kaimakam of Akhlat, who ascertained their whereabouts, but advised the villagers to say nothing about it or they might lose their oxen too.

Serkis Seferian, native of Teyhad in Akhlat, an Armenian political prisoner, died in Bitlis prison on the 20th June. His daughter, Altoon Serkissian, who came to Bitlis to see her father, was carried off with her small child by the Hassananli Kurds of Rejak Aghei on her way back and kept several days in the mountains. She was violated by fifteen men, has since been released, and is now lying dangerously ill at Teyhad.

On the 14th June the same Kurds attacked Jemaldin, an Armenian village in Akhlat, and carried off twenty-six relief oxen.

On the 16th June they plundered the village of Zaghguć, also in Akhlat, and carried off thirty-two relief oxen. These villages were attacked during the night, the houses were pillaged, and women violated, but I have not heard that any one was killed.

The oxen carried off were given by the Relief Committee this spring, and represented a value of about £T. 171.

On the 30th June a caravan of grain was plundered near Perkhoro in Akhlat by the Hassananlis, and a caravan of several merchants from Erzeroum, amongst whom was Serope Bildoyan, an Armenian exile from Constantinople, was plundered on the 13th June near Kirso, between Boulanek and Akhlat. The travellers were stripped and left in their shirts and drawers. In this caravan I myself had a case of whiskey which was taken with the rest. The offenders in this instance are the Hamidieh troopers of Agas Agha Dirdop, who lives near Kirso, on the borders of Boulanek.

The accounts I received from Boulanek of the insecurity of the roads are alarming. Many caravans have been robbed, the Hamidieh troopers having taken to the road in large numbers.

Last week the Kibkili Hamidiehs carried off fifty-five yoke of oxen near Malasgird, which were returning empty from Bitlis, where they had carried grain; and at Tedoun, on Lake Van, where I was encamped on the 30th ultimo, the Hassananlis pursued a caravan to the entrance of the village, but the muleteers escaped with their animals.

On my return to Bitlis I drew the attention of the Vali to the deplorable state of insecurity existing in the eastern portion of the vilayet, especially in Akhlat, Boulanek, Nimrood, and Modeki, and urged upon his Excellency the necessity of taking remedial measures.

The Vali replied that he had nothing but a few zaptiehs at his command to maintain order, and stated that he had already notified some of the occurrences mentioned to the Mushir of the 12th Army Corps and solicited his co-operation in the matter, but that Zeki Pasha adhered to his theory that order could be preserved by the local gendarmerie and refused to utilize the regular troops. The Vali further stated that the troops in Bitlis had been reduced so as to reinforce the Moush contingent, and that he had at the present moment 200 soldiers in the whole sandjak. His Excellency said he would communicate again with the Mushir and would acquaint the Porte with the necessity of employing military force.

There are at the present moment quartered in Moush itself four battalions of infantry—viz., the 1st battalion of the 26th Regiment, the 4th battalion of the 31st Regiment, the 3rd battalion of the 32nd Regiment, and 2nd battalion of the 76th Regiment, and two more battalions are expected.

Behadin Pasha, who is in command of the 28rd Regiment of cavalry, will shortly leave Moush and proceed to Malasgird, which is to be the centre of the Hamidieh cavalry for this district. These troops could be readily utilized, the country restored to order, and the cattle recovered in less than a month, if the necessary orders were issued from Erzingian.

In the meantime, the pressure put upon the Vali by the principal Turkish inhabitants of Bitlis, and, failing the co-operation of the troops, his inability to restore order in Modeki without the assistance of the leading Kurds, coupled with the constant threats which are directed against his own life, have induced his Excellency to release Haji Sejneddin, Yafsin Effendi, and their companions from prison.

The Government are of opinion that revolutionary agents are at work in Akhlat,

and thirty-three Armenian villagers, including one Protestant Armenian missionary, have been arrested in consequence and imprisoned in that caza. The Vali assures me that their papers will be sent to Bitlis and that he will himself examine the charges against them. Akhlat is, as far as my information goes, politically quiet, and is only disturbed by the depredations of the Hassananli Kurds. I cannot help thinking that the present arrests are the work of Hilmy Effendi, the Chief Commissaire of Bitlis, and a creature of the ex-Governor Tahsin Pasha, who is very corrupt, and conjures up Armenian agitators to further his own ends, which compass the extortion of money from the victims for subsequently releasing them. His removal is very desirable.

I have, &c.
(Signed) FRANCIS EDWARD CROW.

No. 35.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received August 9.)

(No. 501.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, July 28, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to inclose an interesting report by Mr. F. E. Crow, now acting as Vice-Consul at Bitlis, of a journey which he has recently made in the Sasun and Guendj districts.

He gives a gratifying account of the present condition of the villages of Semal, Sheuigh and Gheligusan, which obtained such a melancholy notoriety on account of the massacre of their inhabitants in 1894; they have been rebuilt by the Relief Committee out of the funds subscribed in England and America, and the remnant of the population has been put in a position to support themselves.

In the other villages of Sasun, and in the Guendj district, much has also been done for the permanent relief of the people and the reconstruction of their dwellings.

The chief evils from which the population now suffer are caused by the oppression of some of the Kurdish Chiefs, and the excessive demands of the tax-gatherers.

I shall not fail to bring the facts mentioned by Mr. Crow, especially with regard to the forced conversions to Islam, to the notice of the Porte.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 35.

Vice-Consul Crow to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 20.)
Sir, *Bitlis, July 14, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith, inclosed to your Excellency a report on my recent journey to Sasun and Guendj, with reference to the questions of relief and conversion, containing some remarks on the condition of the Mush Plain.

I have, &c.
(Signed) FRANCIS EDWARD CROW.

Inclosure 2 in No. 35.

Report by Vice-Consul Crow on a Journey through Sasun and Guendj.

Preface.

THE relief work in the Armenian district of Sasun, which comprises the mountainous portion of the Mush Sandjak, the Cazas of Koulp and Hazon, the district of Talori, and a portion of the Guendj Sandjak, has now been going on for nearly two years, in the course of which the sum of, roughly, 17,000*l.* from English, American, Armenian, and Turkish relief sources has been poured into the district. Fourteen villages have been rebuilt, and oxen, grain, and pecuniary assistance distributed to forty-nine plundered villages, containing 1,773 families, or, approximately, 14,000 inhabitants. The total Armenian population of Sasun and Guendj, exclusive of Chabakchur, is 15,000.

In spite of the work already done and the indefatigable efforts of the Rev. R. M. Cole and other American missionaries, and the Gregorian authorities at Mush,

lamentable reports still continued to reach the Committee in the spring of 1897, nearly two years after the commencement of the relief work, informing them of unsown fields, impoverished families, impending starvation, urgent need, and the like, accompanied by pressing appeals for more money to alleviate this distress.

In view of the large amounts already expended, the unreliable character of the information received from local sources, and the absence of any efficient control over these remote districts, it appeared advisable, before acceding to these demands, to visit Sasun and Guendj, in order to ascertain the results of the labours of the past two years, and test the truth of reports, which, under the circumstances, I had reason to believe were exaggerated. This was especially desirable with regard to Guendj, much of which had so far been unvisited, and where the conditions of travelling are such that the inhabitants of many villages, protected by the inaccessible nature of their habitations, had been exempted from close examination or personal inquiry.

The reports received at Constantinople, and confirmed by the Gregorian authorities at Mush, that numerous villages in Guendj had, willingly or otherwise, embraced Islamism increased the desirability of a journey in that direction, and, with the authorization of Her Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople, I proceeded to Sasun and Guendj on the 7th June last, in order to inquire into the questions of relief and conversion.

I availed myself of the opportunity afforded of visiting the Mush Plain, in order to examine more closely the present political and material condition of the 150 Christian villages there situated. This is regarded by the Ottoman Government as one of the richest granaries of Asia Minor, and is a fruitful source of income to the Treasury in tithes and taxation. In the course of my journey opportunities also occurred of studying the temper, condition, and attitude of the Kurds, sedentary and nomad, in the mountainous regions of Sasun, and in the southern fringe of the Guendj mountains, trending towards the Diarbekir Plain. I was accompanied by Hagop Effendi, Dragoman of this Vice-Consulate, to whom I am indebted for much useful information, and whose services were especially valuable in places where nothing but Armenian and Kurdish were spoken.

I entered Sasun through the mountains behind Mush, climbing the Dirin Gadir, where the snow still remains, and descending into the fertile plateau beyond to the villages of Kegashen, Semal, and Shenigh, with the snow-capped Antok Dagh rising grandly at the eastern end of the valley.

Kegashen was not included in Tahsin Pasha's "list" of disaffected villages of 1894, and, being the residence of Kurdish Aghas, was untouched. Semal and Shenigh were plundered and burnt to the ground.

Semal now consists of 80 houses scattered in a valley, with a population of 631 souls. Applicants for relief from the village reached Mush the day before my departure. The houses, which are solid and comfortable, were rebuilt with relief money, and clothes, furniture, and bedding have been provided from the same source. I visited most of the inhabitants and found them thriving and healthy. The wheat harvest of 1896 was good, but the millet partially destroyed by hail. Their fields are all under cultivation; nearly every family has a cow, and, according to their own admission, there are 20 teams of oxen and 150 sheep in the village. No taxes have been collected since they returned to their homes in 1895. Semal, although not yet as prosperous as it was before the events of 1894, has been restored by the Relief Committee to easy circumstances.

Shenigh, about 1 mile further on in the same valley, was rebuilt by the Committee. It contains 70 houses, with a population of 540 souls. I found this village even more prosperous than Semal. Their fields are all under cultivation. There is an abundant wheat crop coming on. They have wheat and millet in their houses, and two mills are working. The villagers own 100 sheep, 15 cows, and 20 yoke of oxen. There is no sickness. An assured existence has tended to increase the population, and sixty births have occurred in Shenigh during the past twelve months.

Gheliegusan is divided from the Antok plateau by a series of lofty and precipitous mountains, and lies at the bottom of a deep valley. It was here that the troops stood by while the Kurds fired the house of Bedros, a wealthy Armenian farmer, and watched a stream of liquified honey from over 100 burning bee-hives pour down the mountain side into the river. The village is divided into seven hamlets, and has a population of 1,320 souls. The houses have nearly all been rebuilt. The fields are sown. I found grain and bread in the houses. The villagers

possess about 400 sheep. There is no want or sickness, and the population is increasing at the same rate as in Shenigh.

Aliantsik is prosperous. The villagers have no complaints. Their houses are rebuilt, their fields cultivated, and they have 100 head of cattle. They are preparing the ground for the July sowing of millet.

Aghpig, in Hazon, is situated in a valley of the Zovarsar Dagh, at the foot of the Surb Maratouga, in Kurdish Sasun. There are 60 houses, and a population of 601 persons. They suffered less than others, as their cattle was kept for them by friendly Kurds, and restored after the massacres. Their houses were rebuilt by the Committee. The villagers, who came to Gheliegusan to see me, gave a very good account of themselves. They find relief acceptable, but are quite able to do without it.

The same remarks apply to Hitengh, also in Hazon, which is well supplied with cattle, and where the condition of the population of 328 souls is satisfactory. Hitengh is divided into two parts, and lies near the Kurdish villages of Kodzozvank and Hargurgh, which protected them at the time of the massacres, and saved their cattle.

The journey from this point to Talori is across country over the mountains. There are no roads or bridle-paths. In some places loaded animals can, with difficulty, find a footing. Snow bridges are numerous, and travelling is tedious and difficult.

The district of Talori, in the Caza of Khonep, consists of the eight villages noted in the margin.*

During the summer months the peasants camp out in mud-and-wattle huts in the up-lands above their villages, for the purpose of cultivating their fields, and remain there till after the harvest. The soil in Talori is not productive, and, under normal conditions, the staple occupation of the inhabitants is mining and blacksmith's work. They forge plough-shares and other implements, and purchase their requirements from agricultural districts.

Good iron is found in the neighbourhood, and the ten master blacksmiths employ about 200 persons. The events of 1894 have deprived them of the means of earning a livelihood, as their tools were carried off by the Kurds, and they have no money to buy new ones. They are therefore obliged to live entirely by their fields, and the result is far from satisfactory. Talori, moreover, suffered heavily in the massacres, and the widows and orphans of the victims are still in need of support. They are a hardy race of mountaineers, and differ in physique and bearing from the Armenians of the plain. They still carry their arms, and receive civil treatment from Kurdish hill-men and Turkish tax-gatherers. The Government has several times tried to collect taxes during the last two years, but has not, so far, succeeded in getting anything.

Talori is an out-of-the-way place, and difficult of access. The peasants are as warlike in spirit as their neighbours the Sasunli Kurds, and equally well armed, so the zaptiehs are content to take "No" for an answer, and do not venture on any pressure.

It was in Talori that many of the women, during the events of 1894, threw themselves into the river, preferring death to the treatment which awaited them if captured by the Kurds or the troops.

I visited the summer encampment of the village of Talori, which consists of about twenty-five families. The aspect of poverty is considerably heightened by the rough temporary character of the structures in which they live, and which are merely roud-sheds, and show no attempt at comfort. But apart from this, the village is poor. They have one cow, fifty sheep, and a few oxen. Many fields are unsown, and many women and children, having lost their bread-winners, are dependent on the charitable efforts of their neighbours for the cultivation of their ground.

Khartk, which lies low in the valley and in a warmer climate, contains ten families, and the fields are sown. They have four oxen, ninety-three sheep, five cows, and cultivate millet, wheat, barley, and fruit. They reap the harvest in June, while the peasants of Talori, on the higher level, get no crop till August.

Ispergank has a population of 108 persons. They have one ox, two goats, and their fields are only half-sown. It is the poorest village in Talori.

Purkh contains fifteen families, consisting of eighty-three persons. They

* Talori proper, Khartk, Ispergank, Purkh, Dovalink, Klovld, Haklmank, and Khilechins.

possess twelve head of cattle. Their field are sown, and there is much fruit. They, too, gather their harvest in June.

Dowalink lies lower than all the others. There are ten families, consisting of eighty-nine persons. They have two oxen, twenty sheep, and one cow. The heat is almost tropical, and they were harvesting on the 14th June, when we passed through.

Klovid has nine families, or sixty-nine souls, one ox, and six sheep. Their fields are sown, but the area covered is insufficient, and there is considerable poverty.

Haklimank contains nine families, with a population of sixty-three souls. They have three oxen, two cows, three heifers, and twenty-two sheep. Their fields are sown. The widows are very poor.

Khiloghink contains twenty-three families, with a population of 167 persons. They have fifteen sheep, four oxen, one cow, and two donkeys. Their fields are partially sown. They look to the fruit for support, and are very poor.

I distributed 33*l.* among the villages of Talori, which will be sufficient to keep the more needy applicants till the harvest.

Leaving Khoulp, I crossed the mountains into Guendj proper. There is no road, though occasionally a sheep-track, and most of the travelling has to be done on foot.

In Guendj the mountains are even more lofty and precipitous than those in Sasun, and the soil is loose and slippery. The baggage and tents have to be carried on men's backs, the horses and mules either picking their way like cats along stony peaks and mountain ridges, or hanging like flies on the narrow crumbling ledges which overlook the deep ravines.

Ishkhuntsor has a population of 454 persons. It has been partially rebuilt by the Committee, and possesses six oxen and eighteen sheep. The fields are sown. The Government levies taxes regularly, although the village has been twice plundered: once by the Khianli Kurds, in 1894, and again during the Bitlis massacre of 1895. There are twenty-four widows in fifty-one families, most of whose husbands perished in the events of 1894. I gave the widows support till harvest time.

Onguznagh has a population of 291 persons. The men fled at our approach and hid themselves, taking their arms, and leaving their women and children in the village. They espied my escort at a distance, and surmised we had come for no good. The village was plundered, but not destroyed, being under the protection of Suleiman Agha, of the Badikauli tribe, who takes "hafirlik," but permits plunder. They lost 1,200 sheep in 1894, of which the Government recovered 400. These were again carried off in 1895, and they have now five oxen, twenty-three sheep, and five cows, which have been given them as charity by their Kurdish protector.

The tax-collectors were in the village on our arrival, but disappeared. They are demanding the outstanding sums due for 1894-95. Though orders were issued by the Government to remit taxes in plundered villages, they are, nevertheless, collected here.

The tax-collectors levy a tax nominally for the current year, and, on its receipt, apportion the amount to clearing the debit of previous years, from which they are officially exempted.

Relief was needed in this village, especially for twenty widows, whose husbands perished in the Diarbekir massacre; but to give money when the tax-collectors were in the district would be useless, as it would be immediately appropriated by them after my departure. The relief clothes given them were taken by the Kurds, and the women are in rags and the children almost naked. I sent them money subsequently for grain, and also clothes, through the Episcopal Vicar of Mush.

Ardyouk has a population of 324 persons. They have six oxen, twenty-seven sheep, and three cows. There are twenty-two widows in great poverty. The village was plundered twice in 1894 and 1895. They pay their taxes regularly. I gave relief.

Sevit has a population of eighty-three souls. The fields are all sown. Four widows received relief.

Gremoré has not been rebuilt, and the population are scattered in the neighbouring villages of Ars and Pargak. They have no fields, and complain that Hussein Agha, son of Ali Agha, of Passur, prevents their return. The latter enjoys a good reputation at Passur, and is generally looked upon by Armenians as a protector. I therefore doubt the truth of this. The Passur Government will attend to their complaint.

The Sasun villages in the Mush Sandjak, and those of Talori, pay no "hafirlik" to Kurds since the events of 1894, but the abuse still continues in Guendj, the tax being levied by the Kurdish Aghas in return for their so-called protection.

The condition of many Armenian villages in Guendj is still worse than that of serfage. They are hewers of wood and drawers of water for the Kurd, who taxes them and protects them as long as it suits his convenience, but does not scruple to abandon them to the greed and animosity of other Kurds at his pleasure.

In Kebgervank they had never seen a European, and our arrival excited some interest. This is one of the most prosperous villages I have seen in the Guendj. They have been twice relieved, and the results are satisfactory. The population is 530, and there are sixty families, forty families having migrated during the famine of 1895 to Diarbekir, where the men perished in the massacre of 1895. Many of the widows and children returned, and these are a burden on the more prosperous inhabitants, but the village seems able to take care of itself. I relieved the widows.

Passur is the seat of the Khoulp Government. There are twenty-five Armenian houses with a population of 216. The inhabitants are poor, owing to phylloxera and hail, which ruined the mulberry trees and fruit last year. This year the crops promise well, and the sericulture has revived. They have received relief, though they were not plundered, but there is no necessity to continue it. Passur, which is well wooded, is situated in an extensive valley on the borders of the Khoulp River, one day's journey above its junction with the Batman Su or Tigris. There is abundant cultivation and several powerful Kurdish Beys reside in the neighbourhood. The place, I was informed, had not been visited before by Europeans. While at Passur I received a visit from Ahmed Fevzi Effendi, Cadi of Passur, and Acting Kaimakam of Khoulp.

According to Armenian accounts, it is due to his exertions and personal influence that a massacre of Christians was prevented in these parts. He is on good terms with the Kurds, and uses his influence for the protection of Christians. This Administration is considered just and mild. His tenure of office has now expired, and the new Cadi has arrived. His departure is much regretted.

Conclusion: Relief Work.

The subscribers and the Committee have every reason to congratulate themselves on the results attained by the sums so liberally bestowed on the districts of Sasun and Guendj. Any material comfort or prosperity now visible in the area covered by their humane exertions is absolutely and entirely due to the relief fund. Fourteen villages have been raised from the ashes, thirty-five partially restored, and permanent means of existence placed within the reach of 14,000 individuals. The effects of their labours have no doubt been somewhat neutralized in localities where taxes, though remitted by orders from the Central Government, have still been and still are enforced by the obstinacy of local subordinates; and a portion of the money has thus served to increase the revenues of the Imperial Treasury. It is also impossible to waive the fact that large sums have departed from the purpose for which they were originally intended, and have found their way into the pockets of the Kurds. Aghpig, Hiteugh, Ishkhuntsor, Onguznagh, Ispergank, Ardgouk and Levit were plundered again after the distribution of relief, and money, clothes, bedding, and household goods given by the Committee were carried off. The original loss of animals, too, was enormous; more than 20,000 head of cattle and sheep having been taken, and many years will be required to restore the inhabitants of these districts to anything like their former prosperous condition. But there is no doubt as to the general results of the relief, and as its objects, which I take to be the removal of these people from the chances of starvation, and the placing within their reach of means to earn their own livelihood, have been attained, I have no hesitation in advocating its discontinuance. To prolong it is to encourage the population in idleness, and to create for them a fictitious existence, which cannot fail to produce deleterious results. Individual cases will still require assistance, but the time of harvest is approaching, and these should rapidly decrease. The grant, moreover, of blacksmiths' tools for the villages of Talori should not be overlooked,

and when this has been done, the work can cease. The sums which remain at the disposal of the Committee can, in my opinion, be more profitably expended in relieving urgent distress and warding off starvation from the populations of Akhlat, Khizan, and other districts, than in adding to the prosperity of the inhabitants of Sasun and Guendj.

Conversion.

The converted villages lie in the southern mountains of Guendj, fringing the Diarbekir Plain; some in the plain of the Sarum Su and the adjacent valleys, and others on the road to Guendj and Ardeshin, in the direction of Chabakchur.

Leaving Passur and the Khoulp Valley, I proceeded due west through the Nahié of Petchar and visited the converted villages in the adjacent district. I then rejoined the Guendj road above Riz to the north and visited the Nahié of Zihtek, traversing the mountains which border Chabakchur, and crossing the Euphrates near Ardeshin. From this point I descended into the Mush Plain at its western extremity.

I elicited the following information from the inhabitants of Petchar, the centre of the Nahié and the residence of the Mudir.

In the autumn of 1895, during the Diarbekir massacre, all Armenians in the Valley of Sarum Su and adjoining mountains were plundered by Kurds and embraced Islamism to save their lives. This proceeding was countenanced by the then Kaïmakam of Ledjek. The villagers received some protection from Ahmed Bey, a wealthy Kurd resident at Petchar, and several other Beys, who tried to disperse the marauders and save the Christians. But, after their departure, the Redifs were called out by the Government and attacked the villagers again, whereupon the Kurds returned, with the result that all the Christians turned Mussulman. Six months later, under orders from Government, which were communicated to some villages, and not to others, the matter of notification being left very much to the discretion of the local authority, the new converts received the option of reverting to Christianity and most of those dependent on Ledjek, in the Vilayet of Diarbekir, returned to their original faith. In the Sandjak of Guendj, the villages of Nurshen, Andeo, and Mizagh, the property of Ahmed Bey, availed themselves of the invitation, at the latter's instigation; and became Christian. Dahar Bey, first cousin to Ahmed Bey, and now Acting Mudir of Petchar, who is the most powerful Kurdish Bey of these parts, and exercises great influence over the Mutessarif of Guendj and all other Kurds in the district, was as active in plundering, oppressing, and forcing the Armenians to change their religion, as his cousin was in protecting them. He compelled the peasants of Riz, Murdarik, Izmoigh, Hagenchur, and Petchar to embrace Islamism, under pain of death, and has since repeatedly threatened to kill them if they revert to Christianity. Intercourse with any Christian priest is prohibited in these villages. They are visited by a Mollah and compelled to practise Mahommedan rites, but so far they have evaded circumcision, though repeatedly pressed to consent to it. Ahmed Bey, who is on the worst terms with his cousin, and speaks freely of the latter's misdeeds, confirms this account. During my stay at Petchar I had many opportunities of conversing with him, as he knows Turkish. He is a refined-looking man of about 45, with the manners of a gentleman, and seems liberal-minded and enlightened. He is well spoken of by all Christians in the district, who attest his humanity and good offices on behalf of the Armenian population during the events of 1895.

The forced converts (ten families) of Petchar, who feared to communicate with me openly, visited my camp during the night and made a statement, of which the following is a literal translation:—

"We earnestly wish to profess Christianity again. Our tongues are Moslem but in heart and spirit we are Christian. We are terribly afraid of Dahar Bey, and fear to become Christian. Nurshen and Andeo, under the protection of Ahmed Bey, became Christian, but Dahar Bey gave trouble to them day and night in consequence, and wounded many. When we saw this, in spite of the words of Ahmed Bey, who is very kind to us, we feared to declare ourselves Christian. The Guendj Government has sent us no message. If one was sent it has been kept by Dahar Bey, for it never reached us."

I spent a day at Riz and examined the inhabitants of this and the neighbouring villages. I received the following account:—

The Kurdish Beys of Petchar, Dahar Bey, Ameer Bey and sons, Dervish Bey, Fatha Bey, Ismaïl Bey, Kerim Bey and Yousuf Bey, sent their servants and followers in the autumn of 1895, to the number of 300 men, to Riz, Murdarik, Izmoigh, Hedgenchur, Nurshen, and other villages in the Nahié. They plundered the Armenian houses, taking their cattle, grain, and household goods. The inhabitants fled to the mountains, where they wandered for eight days. They then went to the Beys in Petchar, who, headed by Dahar Bey, promised them their lives if they embraced Islamism. Seeing that all the villages round had done so they consented. They were taken to the mosque before Mollahs Mustafa and Mohammed, and received Mahommedan names. They were made to perform ablutions and instructed in Moslem forms of prayer. The women were taken to the Kurdish houses in Petchar and their names changed. After remaining fifty days in Petchar and living on charity they returned to their homes.

During the eighteen months which have elapsed several villages in the Nahié have reverted to Christianity, but those more immediately under the influence of Dahar Bey and his confederates remain Mussulman. Mollahs are deputed to attend and instruct them, to whom they have to pay taxes (2 ekias). These consist in a tithe of all they possess and 1 gode of grain per capitem. They are not allowed to see any priest. Their children are unbaptized, and their dead buried according to Mahommedan rites. So far they have evaded circumcision, though repeatedly pressed to consent to it. The Beys try to marry the women to their Kurdish retainers and mix the races. In most cases this has been avoided. There have been three weddings during the past eighteen months, and the ceremony was performed by a Mollah. One girl was forcibly taken from Murdarik and married to a Kurd in Petchar.

With seven exceptions none of the converts have been officially recognized by the Government. The seven in question, marginally noted,* all of Riz, were taken last October to Guendj, and brought before the Mutessarif, who, in the presence of Dahar Bey, asked them if they voluntarily became Mussulmans. From fear of the latter they declared their willingness. The Mutessarif then registered their names, but no Murahhass was present. They were not circumcised, and went through no further ceremony.

The peasants of the above district are completely terrorised by Dahar Bey. They desire to profess Christianity, but fear the consequences.

At Riz the Mollahs have appointed certain of the Armenian Elders to be "Solis." I asked one elderly man who made him a "Sofi," and he promptly replied, "the Great Powers of Europe." I could only answer that my presence in his village was a proof that England at least did not wish him to remain one.

The Nahié of Zihtek is situated in the west of Guendj, on the south border of the Euphrates, and the inhabitants are nearly all Kurds. Six villages, containing forty families, which comprise nearly the whole Armenian population of Zihtek, have embraced Islamism.

Six families in Valer have reverted to Christianity, but, for reasons subsequently given, they state that it is impossible for them to remain Christians and live.

No massacre or plundering occurred in Zihtek, but the Armenian population, under pressure from Hussein Bey, now Mudir of Valer, Sherif Aghi of Guernos and Monah Elias, Moukhtar of Valer, who are the dominant Kurdish powers in the district, turned Mussulman in 1895, and so saved their lives and property. Though desirous of reverting to Christianity they are not allowed to profess their original faith or see their priests. Their children remain unbaptized, and their marriage and funeral ceremonies are performed according to Mahommedan rites. They have neither been circumcised, though often urged to submit to it, nor officially recognized by the Government. Their status as Mussulmans is, however, tacitly admitted by the authorities.

The following curious episode throws some light on the means employed by Turkish authorities to induce Armenian Christians to change their faith.

Hyder Effendi, Nufuss Naziri, or Registrar of Guendj, was in Zihtek at the time of the Chabakchur massacre, engaged in registering such members of the Armenian community for military exemption taxation, as had hitherto evaded the tax by concealing their names. He deceived the peasants by telling them that the Government had sent him to give them relief of 1 lira a-head, and so obtained a true return of the male population. He then added so many years to the ages of

* Bedros Mirzoolan (Headman of Riz), Dano Tamoyan, Tomas Guendjoyan, Bado Maralyan, Hagies Harelijan, Tomas Varamyan, and Bedros Hovsoyan.

the persons registered, inscribing a boy of three as six or ten and so on, in order to substantiate a fraudulent claim for three years or more arrears of tax. Nothing more was said about the matter at the time; the villages turned Mussulman for the reasons previously given, and the question of unpaid taxes was allowed to drop.

Six months ago, on receipt of the orders from Constantinople regarding the converted population, the six families of Valer above-mentioned declared themselves Christian, whereupon the Guendj Government produced the fraudulent record of Hyder Effendi, and directed these families to pay the sum of 8,600 piastres, arrears of military exemption tax, calculated on the numbers and ages of the persons who had hitherto avoided payment. The Mudir, to whom they addressed themselves in the first instance, advised them to remain Mussulmans, and said that, in the event of their doing so, the claim would not be enforced. The Mutessarif of Guendj, to whom they subsequently applied on three separate occasions by Arzouhal, upheld the account as correct.

The sum claimed is, of course, grossly exaggerated, as, even supposing these six families had managed to conceal three babies a-piece for four years, which, in a Turkish village with a Turkish Mudir, is extremely unlikely, the arrears of the tax, which is 40 piastres a-head, would only amount to 2,800 piastres. But the Guendj Government refuses to revise the register or reopen the question.

Under these circumstances, they paid 850 piastres a few days before my arrival, and the Government sent word telling them to be ready to pay the rest. The six families, seeing ruin staring them in the face, and finding their appeals unheeded, propose to accept the alternative offered, and again become Mussulmans.

The pressure thus brought to bear has had its effect on all the Armenians in the Nahié, who embraced Islamism to save their lives, and now things are quiet are anxious to revert to their former faith, as, seeing the treatment to which the inhabitants of Valer are exposed, they elect to remain as they are.

In Guernos, the residence of Sherif Agha, there are twenty-five Kurdish and five Armenian families.* The latter are Mahommedan converts. I endeavoured to see them, but Sherif Agha prevented me, and, on my pressing him, sent five Kurds to my tent, disguised as Armenians, who represented themselves as the heads of the converted families. The deceit was apparent, as most of these men spoke Armenian very badly, and some of them not at all, neither did they know the names of their own fathers or simple details regarding the others. One, in fact, was a Kurdish boy, whom my Dragoman had already examined in the afternoon, and whom he recognized.

I pointed out the error to Sherif Agha, but the latter was obdurate, and said he had no more Armenians. Hagop Effendi went to inspect the Armenian houses at his invitation, but they took him to Kurdish dwellings, and stated that there were no other Armenians in the village.

I learnt from a Kurdish source that the five families were forced to become Moslems by Sherif Agha at the time of the Chabakchur massacre in 1895. Many have been circumcized. They are not allowed to communicate with Christians or see their priests. This account was confirmed by an Armenian guide whom we afterwards procured from the village. He stated that Sherif Agha bore the worst possible reputation for cruelty, and was the terror of all Armenians in the neighbourhood.

A month ago the five families tried to escape, but were brought back, Sherif Agha telling them that if they did not remain Mussulmans he would make away with them, and no one would ever hear about them.

In a remote and fanatical district like Guernos, with a Chief of the character and temperament of Sherif Agha, such a threat is simple to execute. The Armenians cannot, under present conditions, profess Christianity and live.

The following is a summary of the Christian families in Guendj who have embraced Islamism to save their lives, and who wish to revert, but fear to do so, owing to local conditions and the terrorism exercised by Kurdish Beys and others.

Nahié of Petchar, Sandjak of Guendj.

Petchar, 10 families; Riz, 50; Murdarik, 9; Izmough, 3; Hergenchur, 1; who are under the influence of Dahar Bey, Mudir of Petchar, and that of other Beys in the nahié.

* Ohannes Devrishyan, Hassan Reshidyan, Vartan Guernoyan, Hassan Megroyan, and Osman Vartanyan.

Nahié of Zihtan, in Sandjak of Guendj.

Diaribogh, 7 families; Daregeui, 7; Kupar, 5; Chimaynil, 6; Valer, 8; Guernos, 5; who are under the influence of Sherif Agha and other Notables of Valer, and whose option is affected by their inability to pay the fraudulent arrears of military exemption tax, claimed by the Government in the event of their reversion. In all, some 900 souls. This does not include Chabakchur, which, I understand, was visited by Mr. Waugh, and about which I have no information.

Conclusion: Conversions.

There is a general opinion that, in the central provinces of Anatolia, the Kurdish and Armenian peasantry, having sprung from the same race, are so much akin in feeling, habits, and idea, that the transition from one sect to the other does not, apart from any moral consideration, involve particular hardship. I cannot endorse this opinion after reviewing the condition of the Armenians in Guendj, now brought more than ever within the pale of Mahommedan influence by the forcible abandonment of their religion and the adoption of Islam.

The Armenian peasantry, like the peasantry of other nations, are more attached to their religion than the residents in towns, and at a time like the present, when they have so little left, when educational advantages are withdrawn, and their material development and personal security endangered, it is natural that the ties of religion should be intensified. The 900 persons now deprived of the offices of their priests, and compelled, under fear of death, to support Mollahs, and to follow their instructions in the exercise of Mahommedan rites, feel their position acutely; they offer the melancholy spectacle of a victim bound hand and foot, their present hopes and future prospects subject to the tyranny of a merciless oppressor.

In view of the reactionary absolutism which bars all progress or reform in Turkey, it is difficult to conjecture what means can be adopted to free them permanently from their tormentors. They live in the centre of a fanatical and savage Kurdish population, who regard murder as an every day occurrence, provided they are not themselves the victims, and look upon Christians as fit only to be killed or converted. But these same Kurds have a wholesome dread of the Sultan and his power, and, though mere orders are not likely to have any effect, in the absence of any sanction attaching to their infringement—there being no one to control their execution in those remote places—yet, if rendered sufficiently strong in the first instance, and accompanied by fine, punishment, or removal if disobeyed, it is possible they may bring about the desired result. In any case, I would strongly advocate the punishment of Dahar Bey of Petchar, and Sherif Agha of Guernos, who seem to be the dominant evil spirits of those regions. If both of them could be removed, and Ahmed Bey given the Mudirlik in the place of his cousin, the effect would be salutary, and the Christians would have less to fear. If this cannot be done, guarantees might be taken from the leading Kurds for the protection of Christians in the free exercise of their religion, with a heavy forfeit attached if broken. But I fear, as long as Dahar Bey, Sherif Agha, and their confederates remain masters in Petchar and Zihtan, there will be no religious freedom for Christians in those parts.

Kurds.

The Kurdish tribes are generally quiet throughout Sasun and Guendj. I did not hear of a single instance of violence or oppression till I reached Petchar, and there learnt of the misdeeds of Dahar Bey, the Mudir.

The Badikanli or Khianli tribe frequent Guendj and parts of the Sandjak of Mush. The Lachkanli are found in the Mush and Hazon districts. The Bakiranli and Rashkotanli ply between Diarbekir and Sasun. The Balakli stretch from the Khonit mountains, on the south side of the Mush Plain, to the mountain of Surb Marstover, in Kurdish Sasun. In Zihtan, Petchar, and Chabakchur the Dimli tribe predominate, and the Haverdanli haunt the borders of Diarbekir and Ledjek. These are all Nocher or nomads, except the Haverdanli, who now begin to show signs of settling down, and have built houses in the valley of the Sarum Su.

In the Khoulp Su Valley Yusuf Agha and Hussein Agha, influential Kurds

living near Passur, afford protection to Christians, and control the more lawless Kurdish settlements. Suleiman Agha, of Sindagh, between Ardgonk and Talori, in Khoulp, levies blackmail on the villages round. He is a well known character. The Sasunli Kurds, who are the wildest, afford some protection to the Armenians of Talori, the martial instincts with which both are imbued forming a bond of sympathy between them.

The Armenians of Aghpig and Hitough, in Sasun, and of Jigsi, in Khoulp, live on friendly terms with their Kurdish neighbours, and in many other parts of Sasun and Guendj a *modus vivendi* is attainable, and Kurds and Christians, uninspired by religious antagonism, have realized that in the identity of their interests lies the surest guarantee for their mutual development. At certain seasons of the year there is still trouble, when the nomads move from their winter quarters to summer pastures, and return, but, though many nomads were on the move during my visit, I failed to hear any complaints of robbery or violence.

Kurds, with the exception, perhaps, of the Sasunli and the Modeki tribes, are well under control, and pay deference to orders from Constantinople. If they are quiet now, it simply is because they have no instructions to be anything else. They do not, in Sasun at least, go on the war-path without the approval or encouragement of a higher authority. They are a convenient scape-goat, on which the Government is only too willing to shift the responsibility of its own defective administration, but it is a mistake to suppose that they are out of hand.

Mush Plain.

The Mush Plain is stated to be 35 miles long by 12 miles broad, and contains over 200 villages, of which 150 are Christian. Of these three are Catholic, three Protestant, and the rest Gregorian. The plain is watered by the Kara Su, an affluent of the Euphrates, and the Murad Su or Euphrates itself. It is fertile; wheat, barley, rice, millet, rye, linseed, vines, and vegetables being largely grown. But, in spite of every natural advantage, there is not a single prosperous Christian village in the plain. Some have already succumbed to the high pressure of taxation, with its attendant evils of usury and foreclosure, imposed by the authorities, in order to fill the coffers of the local Treasury, while others, plundered outright in 1894 and 1895, have been allowed no time to recover. The oppression is systematic and general, and the object of the Government seems rather to compass the ruin of a Christian population than to further the development of a fertile district, inhabited by an industrious agricultural people, and capable, under fair treatment, of yielding a profit on every acre of ground under cultivation.

The present Mutessarif, Reshid Bey, is new to his office, and rigorous in his method of squeezing every piastre he can out of the district under his administration. He is entirely in the hands of a dishonest and fanatical Mufti. His proceedings in the matter of taxation are deplorable. He takes all he can lay his hands on through the agency of his collectors, listens to no remonstrances, pays no heed to the Vali's injunctions, imprisons men who complain, levies military exemption tax in contradiction to superior orders in places where it has been remitted, enforces the payment of taxes by beating and ill-treatment, and, in short, sanctions or countenances abuses as varied in conception as they are burdensome in character.

Armenian villages where Kurdish Notables reside are unmolested by the inhabitants of neighbouring Kurdish settlements. This is almost an axiom. The latter act as policemen, and policemen must be paid. The arrangement is, perhaps, a trifle one-sided, as the guardians value their services highly, but in Kurdistan protection, whatever the character or the cost of it, is welcome. Those not so favoured are exposed to the pilferings and extortions of their Kurdish neighbours, and the apathy of local officials has long since taught them the uselessness of protracted and costly recrimination.

I visited a large number of villages in the plain, and found crucial instances of oppression and misgovernment, which are too numerous to give in detail.

The depression of agriculture, and the lamentable condition of the Armenian population, are mainly due to five evils, which it would not be difficult to remedy.

1. *The Tithe System.*—The tithes are sold by auction yearly. If bought by the villagers themselves, or by a Multezim with any scruples, no harm is done, but if the latter, as is too often the case, is a mere speculator, with no personal interest in the village beyond the amount of his tithe, the results are disastrous. The purchaser invades the village with his servants, coljis, and horses, and lives there at free quarters for sometimes four months. The legal tithe is about 11⅛ per cent. of the produce, but the villagers are often robbed to the extent of 25 per cent. The danger of the system is that it places the peasants and their substance entirely in the power of one man, who is autocrat of the village for the year, and who can work his will with the inhabitants and their property without any interference from the Government. If tithes are to be farmed, the only sure and satisfactory method of guarding against evils of this kind is in the "Régie" system, or "Emaner," that is, for the tithe bargain to be negotiated directly between the village and the local Government, and for the produce to be correctly measured by Government officials at harvest time, and the quantity agreed upon taken. The present system and its consequences ruins the villages.

2. *Taxation Abuses.*—The taxes in themselves are not excessive. If properly levied, they would burden no one. The Government is, however, always in want of money, and the tax-collectors are never out of the village for a week together. No time is given, and treble and quadruple the amounts due are collected. Agents from one Department visit a village, and demand taxes, and, at the same time, representatives of another sweep off the whole male population to work on the roads. The result is, the villagers are driven into the clutches of the money-lenders, or their property is disposed of by the collectors to the Kurds for one-fourth of its value. There is no revision of the census in the event of families leaving, and the more prosperous have to pay both the taxes of the absentees and those of their poorer neighbours in addition to their own. Thus it happens that a man, who has already cleared himself, is called upon again and again to satisfy claims for which he is in no way responsible.

3. *Abuses of Labour Tax.*—The Amaliat, or labour tax, for the roads is entirely in the hands of the Beledïyé Reissi, or Director of the Municipality. The number of able men in a village is registered, and these are liable to be called out to work on the roads in batches, representing about one-third of their number at a time. Each man must give four days' work or pay 12 piastres. There is no fault to be found with the rule, but the abuses to which it leads are manifold. Sometimes one-half, and often three-quarters of the number registered are called out at one time and are detained for ten or fifteen days unless they pay bribes, and so escape. A village which has already furnished its proper contingent is called upon to send out men a second time. The certificates to which they are entitled on completing their work are withheld, and, instead of working on the roads, they are often employed for the private purposes of those who control them, and detained beyond their proper time on that account. As the population is entirely agricultural, it necessarily follows that the work of a whole village is sometimes interrupted while the Amaliat lasts, and the most serious loss entailed on the population in consequence.

4. *Abuses of Authority by Officers and Gendarmes.*—Officers and zaptiehs, when sent to Armenian villages on Government service, live at free quarters on the inhabitants. They pay for nothing and take of the best. Beating and ill-treatment of the men are universal; offences against women occur, but are less frequent. Complaints of their behaviour are useless as they are never listened to. The result is, they terrorize over the villagers, and do what they like with them. A remedy is not far to seek. There are already about eighty Christian gendarmes in Mush. If their number were increased, and the work to be done in the Christian villages intrusted to them instead of the less scrupulous Turk, the peasants would stand a better chance. Dishonesty and cruelty are inherent vices, which are difficult to eradicate in profoundly ignorant people, and the most stringent orders from Government will not serve to ameliorate the character of their gendarmes.

5. *General Insecurity.*—The Armenian has no security in his village because of the Kurd, nor can he travel or ply with animals on the road or transport merchandize unescorted even within short distances of his own or other villages without running the risk of losing his property. This is more especially the case in the summer months, when the Nomad Kurds bring their flocks to pasture on the mountains bordering the plain. At the present time the Hassonanli's Hamidiehs loot any caravan which comes within approachable distance behind the Lurin road mountain, at the eastern extremity of the plain.

Caravans for Van have changed their route, and dispatch goods by boat across the lake to avoid the dangers of the north-eastern circuit. The efforts of zaptiehs

are ineffectual, and the local Government, unable to remedy the evil, issues futile orders to the Kaimakams of the disturbed districts to recover stolen property, while the latter are equally powerless to execute; yet the Kurds, nomad or sedentary, the latter are equally powerless to execute; yet the Kurds, nomad or sedentary, owe direct obedience to a Pasha, a Bey, or an Agha, of their own denomination, and are therefore easy to control, and, if the Central Government, instead of being content to see the country rendered uninhabitable, would hold these Pashas, Beys, and Aghas responsible for the acts of their tribesmen, and send direct orders to Rezah Agha, Hussein Pasha, and others to stop their plundering and restore the stolen cattle, the insecurity would cease instantaneously, and not a hen-roost would be disturbed throughout the district.

(Signed) FRANCIS EDWARD CROW.

Bitlis, July 10, 1897.

No. 36.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received August 3.)

(No. 503.) *Therapia, July* 28, 1897.

My Lord,

WITH reference to my despatch No. 162 of the 12th March, forwarding a despatch from Her Majesty's Consul at Jerusalem, in which he reported the death of the Greek Patriarch, I have the honour to transmit herewith a telegram which I received from Mr. Dickson on the 13th July, announcing the election of the new Greek Patriarch, who, it appears, is one of the candidates favoured by Russia.

I have, &c.

(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 36.

Consul Dickson to Sir P. Currie.

Jerusalem, July 23, 1897.

(Telegraphic.)

DIFFICULTIES having arisen as regards the voting for the new Greek Patriarch, the Vali of Beyrout arrived there on the 19th instant with instructions to hasten the election. The result is that the Acting Patriarch, who is one of the candidates favoured by Russia, was elected yesterday.

No. 37.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received August 3.)

(No. 505. Confidential.) *Constantinople, July* 27, 1897.

My Lord,

WITH reference to my despatch No. 264 of the 15th April, respecting the action of the French Embassy in connection with the indemnity claimed from the Sublime Porte by the Beyrout Damascus-Birejik Railway Company, I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of the contract drawn up between the Ottoman Minister of Commerce and Public Works and the Local Representatives of the French financiers interested, embodying the terms on which the railway works are to be suspended for a period of five years. I am confidentially informed that backsheesh to the amount of £ T. 30,000 was paid to obtain this additional contract, of which no less than £ T 12,000 went to Izzet Bey.

I have, &c.

(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 37.

Acte Additionnel à la Convention, en date du 21 *Zilcadé*, 1310 (25 *Mai*, 1309), (6 *Juin*, 1893), *relative à la Construction et l'Exploitation d'un Chemin de Fer à voie large de Damas à Birejik.*

ENTRE Son Excellence Mahmoud Djélalleddin Pacha, Ministre du Commerce et des Travaux Publics, au nom du Gouvernement Impérial Ottoman, d'une part;

Et M. Alfred Caporal, représentant de la Société Anonyme Ottomane de Beyrout, Damas, Hauran, Birejik sur l'Euphrate, d'autre part;

Il a été convenu ce qui suit:

Article 1er. Conformément aux Iradés Impériaux communiqués au Ministère du Commerce et des Travaux Publics par teskérés à son Altesse le Grand Vézir, No. 205, en date du 18 Septembre, 1312, et No. 213 du 28 Septembre 1312, l'exécution des travaux de construction du chemin de fer à Birejik, dont la tête de ligne a été fixé à Bayak, situé au 65 kilom. de la ligne Beyrout à Damas, sera suspendue pendant le terme de cinq ans à dater du 1er Janvier, 1897 (N.S.).

Art. 2. S'il est constaté à l'expiration des cinq années pendant lesquelles les travaux seront ajournés que l'excédent résultant tant du montant du produit des dîmes des Sandjaks affectés déjà à la garanie de toutes les autres lignes de chemins de fer de l'Empire après déduction toutefois du montant des sommes nécessaires à parfaire les garanties des chemins de fer pendant les cinq années, s'il est constatée que ces excédents seront suffisants à combler le déficit qui résulterait des recettes générales de la ligne de Damas-Birejik qui ont été garanties au maximum et par kilomètre à la somme de 12,500 fr. par an conformément à la Convention originale, la Société sera tenue de construire la ligne suivant la dite Convention.

Art. 3. A quelque époque que la ligne soit construite, la Société installera alors soit aux stations, soit dans leur voisinage, sur le point à désigner par les autorités militaires, des batiments spéciaux pour les détachements de troupes chargés de veiller à la sécurité publique.

Art. 4. Durant la période du délai d'ajournement mentionnée de l'Article 2, la Société touchera une somme fixe annuelle de £ E. 33,000, qui seront prélevées sur le produit des dîmes des six Sandjaks affectées à la garantie kilométrique de 12,500 fr. accordés par Iradé Impérial communiqué au Ministère du Commerce et des Travaux Publics par teskéré Viziriel en date du 13 Avril, 1310, No. 48. L'Administration de la Dette Publique Ottomane, qui est chargée de la question de ces dîmes conformément à l'Article 28 de la Convention en vigueur, effectuera au fur et à mesure des encaissements le paiement de l'allocation annuelle entre les mains de la Société, et le Ministère des Finances aura la disposition pendant la durée de l'ajournement de tout l'excédent en sus de £ T. 33,000 annuelles allouées à la Société, mais sans pouvoir toutefois aliéner le surplus de l'affectation des six Sandjaks susmentionnées pour l'appliquer à la garantie d'un emprunt, ni d'aucun autre chemin de fer.

Art. 5. A l'expiration des conditions spéciales énumérées ci-dessus, le Firman Impérial de Concession du chemin de fer Damas-Birejik, ainsi que les clauses et stipulations de la Convention et du cahier des charges y annexés en date du 21 Zilcadé, 1310 (25 Mai, 1309) (6 Juin, 1893), sont maintenues intégralement dans toute leur teneur.

Fait et signé en double exemplaire pour être échangé entre les parties à Constantinople, le 30 Septembre, 1312 (12 Octobre, (1896).

(Signé) MAHMOUD DJELLALEDDIN,
Ministre des Travaux Publics.
A. CAPORAL, *Représentant, &c.*

No. 38.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received August 3.)

(No. 506.)

(My Lord, *Constantinople, July* 28, 1897.

IN reply to my representations at the Sublime Porte respecting the tax-collecting abuses in Moush and Ghendj, reported in Mr. Crow's despatch No. 11, forwarded to

your Lordship in my despatch No. 392 of the 12th ultimo, the Grand Vizier has now reported to the Foreign Minister that, according to information received from the Mutessarifs of Moush and Gueudj, no irregularities or undue severity occur in the collection of taxes nor is property being illegally seized and sold.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

No. 39.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received August 3.*)

(No. 567.)
My Lord,

Constantinople, July 28, 1897.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 490 of the 26th instant, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van respecting the necessity of exiling Sheikh Sadik.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 39.

Captain Elliot to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 31.)
Sir,

Van, July 6, 1897.

I HAVE the honour to submit the following Report on the outrages committed by Sheikh Sadig, and also on the services rendered to Christians by Moussa Bey, a Kurdish Chief resident in Khoumaroo, Shemdinan.

I telegraphed to your Excellency on the 3rd June about Sheikh Sadig's intention to attack Moussa Bey.

Shemshi Pasha, the Acting Vali here, on being consulted by the Grand Vizier, replied that there was no need to exile Sheikh Sadig.

From inquiries made in Hekkiari, I am convinced that the first thing to do to restore confidence and order there is to exile Sheikh Sadig.

This question has been brought to your Excellency's notice before.

The Turkish Government have urged the impossibility of laying hands on Sheikh Sadig, as he escapes over the border into Persia when an attempt is made to arrest him.

There is no doubt whatever that if the Government were serious in the matter Sheikh Sadig could be captured with very little difficulty.

He is detested by a large number of Kurds and Turks, as well as by the Christians, and should it be clear that he had fallen into disfavour with the Government his following would melt away from him. I believe that if he were to fly to Persia under a cloud his life would be in danger. In any case, it would be a very simple matter to prevent his return to Turkey.

A great part of the object sought for would thus be gained. His real power at present consists in his wealth and ability to bribe officials, not only here, but in Constantinople. He has, I believe, a telegraph wire to his house, and his boast is that both ends of the telegraph are in his hands.

I am not clear why Shemshi Pasha, whom I believe to be above taking bribes, says it is not necessary to exile him. Either he has been deceived by false information, or he fears the responsibility of initiating measures against the Sheikh. I have always found Shemshi Pasha most courteous, and willing to do everything in his power to maintain order and justice. I am aware, however, of the difficulties of his position, and feel the inutility of my attempting further to urge on him active measures against a man he probably thinks too strong for him.

Sheikh Sadig is at present quiet. He has, I believe, received a hint from friends in Constantinople not to make himself prominent just at present, as his conduct has excited too much attention of late. I am perfectly convinced that the prestige of the Government in Hekkiari is involved in not allowing him to go unpunished.

His exile would not only quiet the Christian Ashirets, but would prove to the

Kurds, who are inclined to be troublesome, that the Government is not afraid to deal with even the greatest among them.

The more I see of this place the less do I doubt the ability of the Government to keep order when it is determined to do so.

I made a special point of visiting Moussa Bey, the Kurdish Chief living at Khoumaroo. He has been in considerable trouble and some danger of late owing to the enmity of Sheikh Sadig, who, there is no doubt, had the intention of making an attack on him in May. It is probably owing to the hints from Constantinople, above referred to, that this did not come off, but of this I cannot be sure. He is regarded with suspicion by some of the Government officials. An instance of this I gave in my despatch No. 31.

It was Moussa Bey who, on hearing of the danger the Archbishop of the Nestorians was in from Sheikh Sadig, went with a party of seventy men by night and rescued him from his house, which was being watched by the Sheikh's servants. The Archbishop remained his guest in spite of the threats of Sheikh Sadig and the Kaimakam of Neri till he could safely get to Kochannes. He has saved many other lives, and set himself fearlessly against oppression. Whilst I was with him he dispatched a party of men to recover some sheep raided from a Christian village by Herki Kurds. The valley of Khoumaroo, in which he has settled for the last two years, was once well cultivated and prosperous. The Christians who inhabited it were forced to abandon it owing to Kurdish raids. It remained deserted for some years till Moussa Bey came and started cultivating it again. The soil is fertile, and there is plenty of water, and he wishes to attract settlers to come and live under his protection.

He has been made Mudir by the Government, but his appointment is not confirmed. Further, he is informed that he is to receive no pay. This he objects to, as the appointment, he tells me, involves a lot of entertaining.

The people in those parts seemed to me to be divided into two parties, one for Moussa Bey and the other for Sheikh Sadig. The former, of course, includes all the Christians, the soldiers, zaptiehs, many Kurds, and well disposed Mahommedans generally.

The latter party chiefly consists of those who feared the Sheikh, or were bribed by him. As among these there are influential officials, the partisans of Moussa Bey have to be careful.

Moussa Bey deserves well of the Government if it honestly desires to restore order and prosperity. He has for some time espoused what has seemed the weaker side, but I trust before long he will prove to have been sound in his judgment. If your Excellency can in any way strengthen his position, and procure him some recognition of his services, it will have an excellent effect.

The Nestorian Archbishop has now, I hope, safely reached Tergavar, in Persia, where his family are living. The Turkish Government wish him to return to his diocese in Shemdinan. The Nestorian people regard it as outrageous that the Head of their Church should be unable to attend to his duties. He will not, however, return unless Sheikh Sadig is sent away, as his church is not far from the Sheikh's residence, and he does not feel safe in his neighbourhood.

I am of opinion that he is justified in so doing.

I have marked on the map attached to despatch No. 33 the principal places mentioned in this Report.

I beg to inclose a statement of the chief offences committed by Sheikh Sadig. These have mostly been reported to your Excellency at various times.

I have, &c.
(Signed) G. S. ELLIOT.

Inclosure 2 in No. 39.

LIST of principal Outrages committed by Sheikh Mehemed Sadig, of Neri, on Nestorian Christians during 1896 and 1897.

(Compiled from information supplied by Mar Shimum and the Metropolitan of the Nestorians, the general accuracy of which is attested by the Rev. W. H. Browne, of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Mission.)

Date.	Nature of Outrage.	Action taken.	Result.	Remarks.
Latter half of June 1896.	A party of eleven Nestorian Christians went to call on the Sheikh at Hottoonan. They found him out, and went to the house of the Metropolitan. The next day, a Sunday, they were invited by the Sheikh, who came up himself to the Metropolitan's house, to return to his house. This they did on Tuesday following. In the evening, while sitting down in the Sheikh's house, their arms were taken away. About midnight they were taken out, bound two and two, and, after being reviled by the Sheikh, they were led off to the Persian frontier, where they were slaughtered and disgustingly mutilated. This occurred in the early morning of Wednesday, and was witnessed by two herb gatherers, one of whom recognized the victims and their murderers. A Begzada neighbour who was in the Sheikh's house on Tuesday evening slipped out and warned the friends of the murdered men. When these were going to the Sheikh they found the mutilated bodies on the frontier. Among the victims were the premier Bishop of the Nestorians, his successor designate, an archdeacon, a priest, and two relatives of Mar Shimum. The Sheikh threatens the Metropolitan with death unless he writes a paper testifying to the Sheikh's innocence of the above crime. To enforce this demand the Sheikh proceeded to waylay the Metropolitan, and put him in such fear that he appealed to Moussa Bey, a Kurdish Chief of Khoumaroo, to protect him. Moussa Bey came by night, took the Metropolitan from his house, at the gate of which the Sheikh's men were sleeping, and put him in safety in his own. The Sheikh then accused Moussa Bey to the Kaimakam of Neri of being a friend of the English and protector of Nestorians. The Kaimakam came with troops and rebuked Moussa Bey, saying that the Government would destroy him, as the Sheikh was acting in accordance with their instructions. Moussa Bey replied that his honour was pledged, and that without a Firman he would not give up his guest.	This was reported to Her Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople	A Commissioner was sent by the Turkish Government, who is suspected of having been bribed by the Sheikh. He said the matter was not proved. Efforts were made by the Government officials to induce the Metropolitan to hush the matter up, and trust himself to the Sheikh.	There are plenty of Mahommedans who can testify to every particular of this case. They, however, fear the vengeance of the Sheikh. Moussa Bey was made Mudir of Khoumaroo in 1896. This year he has been ordered by the late Vali of Van, Phemsudin Bey, to make friends with Sheikh Sadig. The general result of the Sheikh's behaviour is— 1. That the Metropolitan, his household, and almost all the Christians of Shemdinan, have been forced to flee from their own country. 2. There is a very general deduction, both among Kurds and Christians, that the Sheikh's action has the sanction of the Porte, so that Valis cannot touch him or his imitators, who are practically irresponsible, and will increase in numbers and criminality until Hekkiari shall become uninhabitable for Christians. 3. The Sheikh will become what he never was yet, a man of formidable influence and prestige, and will be able to seriously inconvenience the Imperial Government.
Autumn 1896	The Sheikh's servants murdered Caen, the Reis of Zizan, a village of Gavar (Nestorian)	Reported to the Vice-Consul at Van	Action pending	
December 1896 ..	A relative of Sheikh Sadig sent to Casha (priest) Serhan, pretending he wished to see him on business. He laid in wait for the Casha, as he came at his request, and deliberately shot him dead	Ditto	Ditto	
October 1896	Sheikh's servants set fire to the house of Chiri (cousin and tenant of the Metropolitan) one evening. The inmates escaped. Their property was entirely destroyed			
December 13, 1896 ..	The Sheikh broke into the Metropolitan's house and church, and cleared the house of bees, carpets, cooking utensils, and everything that had been left in it.			
1897	The Sheikh repeatedly sent spies and armed servants to waylay the Metropolitan if he should venture out of Kochannes. He (the Metropolitan) was warned by friendly Kurds of good position			

(Signed) W. H. BROWNE.

June 23, 1897.

No. 40.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received August 5.)

(No. 500.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, July 29, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith copy of a despatch I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van, reporting rumours of attempts to be made by Armenian revolutionists to attack that city.

I would call your Lordship's attention to Captain Elliot's remark as to the importance of the Persian Government taking steps to restrain the Armenian revolutionists, and I would suggest that Her Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran should be instructed by telegraph to speak in that sense to the Persian Government.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 40.

Captain Elliot to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 36.)
Sir, *Van, July 13, 1897.*

I REGRET to have to report that there is much uneasiness in the city.

Last Sunday fortnight two officers were discovered distributing rifles from the Arsenal to civilians. Thanks to the vigilance of the authorities they were arrested, and the rifles, thirty in number, were recovered.

The reason assigned for their act was that a report was in circulation that the Turkish Consul at Khoi had telegraphed that the Armenian revolutionists in Selmas intended to cross the border.

I was assured a few days ago by a Turk, in whom I have confidence, that if the revolutionists get into the city and succeed in killing a single Turkish soldier, not an Armenian will be left alive. I lose no opportunity of pointing out that this is just what the revolutionists wish to see done.

There is, however, a not inconsiderable party in the city, with some chief officials and men of position at their head, who are on the look-out for an opportunity to provoke a general massacre of Christians. The soreness of all classes of Turks on the subject of Thessaly would seem to make this all the easier to accomplish.

Very strict orders to maintain quiet have been issued, but should the revolutionists succeed in getting into the city in sufficient numbers to seriously occupy the attention of the troops, the task of restraining the mob within and the Kurds without would become extremely difficult.

A caravan from Persia brought news a few days ago that Selmas is full of revolutionists, who mean to take action of some sort. Information from other sources indicates their intention to get into the city in small parties by stealth and wait an opportunity for a general outburst. I have been supplied with the name of a man who is reported to be engaged in the manufacture of bombs. A certain notorious revolutionist, who was pardoned by the Sultan, has disappeared from this place. He is reported to have gone to fetch arms and ingredients for explosives for bombs that cannot be obtained locally.

I am unable at present to say how much of the above is true, but I am inclined to believe most of it, as the sources from which the information comes are reliable.

There is, I fear, a good deal of sympathy felt with revolutionists amongst the younger Armenians here. Were it not so, it would hardly be possible for an attempt on Van itself to be made. I am of opinion that the Head of the Armenian Community here does not exercise the right sort of influence amongst his people.

If funds for the purpose were at my disposal I would have little difficulty in maintaining agents in Selmas, who would keep me informed of what goes on there.

As long as the Persian frontier continues to harbour the revolutionists, it is impossible to expect a return of confidence and tranquillity here. The effect of the present state of affairs is already seriously felt by local merchants. No one dare invest much capital, and many repudiate all obligations on the pretext of poverty.

I beg with all deference to suggest to your Excellency that pressure be put on the Persian Government to maintain a sufficient quantity of troops on their frontier to keep proper order. In previous despatches I have had the honour to point out the scandalous state of affairs that obtains there. From all accounts this still continues.

I have, &c.
(Signed) G. S. ELLIOT.

No. 41.

Consul Devey to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received August 5.)

(No. 1.)
My Lord, *Jeddah, July 2, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith copies of three short despatches addressed to Her Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople showing the present disturbed state of the Hedjaz.

I have, &c.
(Signed) GEORGE POLLARD DEVEY.

Inclosure 1 in No. 41.

Consul Devey to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 67.)
Sir, *Jeddah, June 29, 1897.*

A REGRETTABLE incident lately occurred some 30 miles south of Yembo, from which port a "sambuk" (native sailing boat) was en route coasting for Jeddah with about thirty men aboard, besides cargo and specie. A craft of the same kind approached, boarded her, and carried off all valuables, but, as no resistance was offered, no one was ill-treated.

Sheikh Shahir-bin-Nasir-al-Zahiri, and Agent of the Grand Shereef, who had gone to Yembo to collect dues from pilgrims, was on board, and lost 400*l.*, the sum he was bringing back. He went off with the thieves, and this fact, combined with his recommendation to the captain, who, when he saw the pirate boat approaching, proposed to stand out into the open, not to do so, as there would be no danger where the Grand Shereef's interests were concerned might, indeed, appear to suggest that he was in connivance with the robbers.

But the Sheikh above-named is a man of such high repute as to be quite incapable of this villany, and it is likely that he went with the robbers in the hope of inducing them to refrain from touching the Shereef's money.

Several Bokhara pilgrims on board the sailing-boat were robbed of all they had, including an amount of Russian paper money.

I have, &c.
(Signed) GEORGE POLLARD DEVEY.

Inclosure 2 in No. 41.

Consul Devey to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 69.)
Sir, *Jeddah, June 30, 1897.*

WITH regret I have to draw the attention of your Excellency to the very disturbed state of the country, which has been progressing in menace and trouble by bounds during the last ten days, and in general throughout the Hedjaz.

The immediate cause of this condition is no doubt the stoppage of communications with Jeddah, on account of the plague and the want of provisions for the surrounding country. Mecca is almost wholly dependent on this port for her daily food, and by far the greater part of the Hedjaz on both these cities; at Yembo there are no stores, and Medina is the least ill-provisioned town in this neighbourhood, having some magazines, and considerable food supplies being raised in the district east of Medina beyond Hedjaz. In spite of this, Medina draws frequently from both the port of Jeddah as well as from Yembo.

No doubt the fact of the Bedouins supplies having remained for nearly two years in very large arrears, has contributed to the present prompt outburst of turbulence.

Yesterday, unhappily, two murders with robbery took place in the immediate neighbourhood of this town, one being of a British Indian huckster, and the other of a shepherd, whose cattle were carried off.

Two or three instances of pillaging "sambuks" of rice and grain have also occurred, and a general sense of apprehension has been observable for some days past, lest the example of plundering be followed in the towns eventually.

I have, &c.
(Signed) GEORGE POLLARD DEVEY.

Inclosure 3 in No. 11.

Consul Devey to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 70.)
Jeddah, July 1, 1897.

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to report that for the past fortnight all communications with Mecca have nominally ceased, that is to say, that passengers and traffic from this town are not allowed to pass at all. Bedouins, however, of the surrounding neighbourhood daily enter and leave Jeddah, and there is every reason to believe that many of them proceed to Mecca constantly; no sort of control for this purpose is possible.

There are, besides, many fugitives from Jeddah who get away unperceived, and I have been assured, on excellent authority, that one person affected with plague actually went to Mecca even after the prohibition was imposed.

The consequent increasing scarcity at Mecca, the dislocation of trade in Jeddah, and, most of all, the vexation felt by those engaged in the camel transport trade, are bringing the country into a very serious state of turbulence.

Cause and effect interact, the interruption of trade through the plague, and quarantine measures leads to disaffection, and the increased want of safety dissuades merchants from caring to forward their goods.

They would not for a moment listen to the proposal of sending goods viâ Rabuc to Mecca, the Harb tribe being for many reasons seriously irritated against both the Grand Shereef and all authority. On the other hand, when the station (*vide* my despatch No. 60 of the 20th June) was suggested, the idea of depositing merchandize there and other camels transporting it to Mecca was felt to be no less impracticable.

As a matter of fact, this regulation is but a dead letter, and the same camels go directly on to Mecca. To-day the situation has become easier, owing to departure of some 1,500 camels for Mecca with supplies, nominally to provision the troops there, but by far the greater part could not be for this purpose.

I have, &c.
(Signed) GEORGE POLLARD DEVEY.

No. 12.

Consul Devey to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received August 5.)

(No. 2.)
Jeddah, July 8, 1897.

My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to forward herewith copy of a short Memorandum, marked Confidential, respecting the disturbed state of the Hedjaz, its causes, and the apprehensions felt here, which is being addressed to Her Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople, and also to inclose the copy of a telegram received from his Excellency the Vali of Hedjaz, and its reply dated yesterday.

I have, &c.
(Signed) GEORGE POLLARD DEVEY.

Inclosure 1 in No. 12.

Memorandum.

TRANQUILLITY among the Bedouins during the latter part of last year broken by only occasional cases of robbery and violence, continued up till the Haj (May 12), the first four months of this year passing without incident, save for the refusal of the Harb tribe to allow the Medina caravan to pass by the direct upper road. (*Vide* my despatch No. 24 of the 7th April.)

2. During the Haj a serious quarrel occurred between the Hodeyi and the Harb tribes at Mecca, with several killed. (*Vide* No. 38 of the 18th May.)

3. Since the Haj matters have been growing constantly worse, no compensation nor satisfaction having been granted the Bedouins. Further, on account of the plague during the last month, and through the prohibition of egress from Jeddah, Mecca inhabitants have grown discontented, whilst camel-hirers, deprived of their means of livelihood, already diminished by a small pilgrimage, have betaken themselves to looting, and it must be remembered that every Bedouin of this neighbourhood is more or less concerned in the camel traffic trade.

4. The example of plundering once set quickly spread all along the coast, where no sailing vessel is safe, and even the Shereef's money has not been respected, as well as in the interior.

5. The immediate cause may largely be ascribed to the quarantine and cessation of communications, but the true cause, no doubt, is the fact of the Bedouins having been practically totally neglected for the last two years, and received no subvention of any kind.

6. The indications of this are clear from the apprehension which may be observed among Jeddah merchants, and would be better understood, but for the want of means of sounding the sentiments and ideas of the Bedouins, who, child-like, look to the Grand Shereef alone, and are now thoroughly enraged with him.

The fresh incident of the attack on soldiers who were returning after having escorted pilgrims from Mecca to Jeddah, was presumably meant to be a manifestation of discontent, and was hardly an ordinary case of robbery with violence. Again, the British Indian, a young pedlar, who was murdered the other day, was not killed for robbery in all probability; at all events, his donkey and goods, and even some little money in his pockets, are said to have been found with the corpse.

The stoppage of pilgrims at Rabuc (*vide* No. 62 of the 25th June), about fifty of whom, including some British Mahys, have since arrived at Jeddah by "sambuk," foregoing their pilgrimage, and suffering pecuniary loss, though the remainder may be by now, perhaps, gone on to Medina,—this again proves that the Bedouins reply to fraud by force.

Yet another trifling example—some Bedouins bringing dates into Jeddah quite recently were stopped and robbed by men of their own tribe, on the grounds that they were traitors to the general cause, and that no dealings should be had with the town so long as their dues remained unpaid.

7. The Vali and Grand Shereef, quietly established at Tayif, are believed to be half indifferent to the grave state of affairs, or else must be extremely ill-informed.

8. It is now feared that the Bedouins may be resolving, in order to attract attention to their grievances, to make a descent upon Jeddah, and bring about a massacre of Europeans, which could not pass without notice.

9. The military forces at Tayif are said to consist of about 3,000 troops; there are none in Mecca, and the garrison here numbers 3,000 effective.

10. This state of discontent and sedition has affected the town, and, all due allowance made for the natural timidity of trade, it cannot but be felt that it combined with want of efficient protection, is extremely serious, far more so than on the outbreak of the late war, for which reason I have ventured to address your Excellency requesting that a British man-of-war be sent here.

The Ottoman troops should also be considerably reinforced.

(Signed) GEORGE POLLARD DEVEY,
Her Majesty's Consul.

Jeddah, July 8, 1897.

Inclosure 2 in No. 42.

Ahmed Rufik Pasha to Consul Devey.

Tayif, July 7, 1897.

(Telegraphic.)

THE Sublime Porte having stated that you had informed Her Britannic Majesty's Embassy that some shops, etc., had been plundered in Jeddah, I made enquiry of the Kaimakan who states that nothing of the kind has happened. I, therefore, beg you to give me any information on the subject that I may telegraph a reply to the Porte.

With compliments.

Inclosure 3 in No. 42.

Consul Devey to Ahmed Rufik Pasha.

Jeddah, July 7, 1897.

(Telegraphic.)

THE statement that I informed Her Majesty's Embassy that shops, &c., had been plundered in Jeddah is quite erroneous. I have, however, been obliged to report with regret the murder a few days ago of a British Indian outside the town by brigands.

With compliments.

No. 43.

The Marquess of Salisbury to Mr. C. Hardinge.

(No. 16.)

(Telegraphic.) P. *Foreign Office, August 5*, 1897, 7 P.M.

A REPORT has been received here from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van to the effect that apprehensions are entertained of an intention on the part of Armenian revolutionists at Salmas to make an attack on Van.

In view of this report you should urge the Persian Government to maintain sufficient troops in the neighbourhood of Salmas to prevent revolutionary movements across the frontier, and maintain order in the district.

No. 44.

The Marquess of Salisbury to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 201.)

Sir, *Foreign Office, August 6*, 1897.

I HAVE received your Excellency's despatch No. 470 of the 12th ultimo, inclosing two Reports from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Adana respecting the large number of Armenian prisoners confined in that town.

Your representations to the Porte on this subject are approved by Her Majesty's Government.

I am, &c.

(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 45.

The Marquess of Salisbury to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 202.)

Sir, *Foreign Office, August 6*, 1897.

I HAVE received your Excellency's despatch No. 469 of the 12th ultimo, inclosing a report from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Adana respecting the manner in which the military exemption tax is levied in that vilayet.

I approve the representations which your Excellency has made on this subject to the Ottoman Government.

I am, &c.

(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 46.

The Marquess of Salisbury to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 204.)

Sir, *Foreign Office, August 6*, 1897.

I HAVE received your despatch No. 475 of the 16th ultimo, inclosing a despatch from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van with regard to the action of the local authorities in insisting on the payment of taxes on cattle imported for relief purposes.

I approve the representations which your Excellency has instructed Mr. Block to make to the Grand Vizier on this subject.

I am, &c.

(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 47.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received August 8.)

(No. 513.)

(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, August 8*, 1897, 12·20 P.M.

CAPTAIN ELLIOT has telegraphed to me as follows:—

"*Van, August 8.*

"The authorities here received a telegram to-day from Bashkale, stating that a body of some 1,500 revolutionary Armenians attacked a frontier village inhabited by Shikak Kurds on the 6th instant at daybreak. Forty to fifty of the inhabitants are stated to have been killed."

The Porte has received similar information.

No. 48.

Mr. C. Hardinge to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received August 8.)

(No. 42.)

(Telegraphic.) P. *Gulhek, August 8*, 1897.

WITH reference to your Lordship's telegram No. 16:

A few weeks ago the Persian Government, at my instance, sent a small body of troops to watch the movements of Armenian revolutionaries, in consequence of information which I received of their proceedings. It was also intended that these troops should overawe the Shekaki Kurds, who came into conflict with and have partially annihilated them.

I received secret information yesterday from Tabreez to the effect that the Armenian revolutionaries are said to be advancing to the frontier, having suddenly made up their differences.

I have given warning to the Persian Government, and have sent instructions to Consul-General Wood to urge upon the Governor-General that immediate steps should be taken to maintain order and prevent any movement across the frontier.

No. 49.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received August 9.)

(No. 511.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, July 30, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Damascus, reporting the death of the Greek Catholic Patriarch.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 49.

Consul Richards to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 34.)
Sir, *Damascus, July 17, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to inform your Excellency that his Beatitude Gregorios Youssuf the 1st, Greek Catholic Patriarch of Antioch, Alexandria, Jerusalem, and the whole East, died here on the 13th instant after a long and painful illness, and was buried on the following day with great pomp and ceremony. The various Consular Representatives being present by special invitation at the funeral service which was held in the Greek Catholic Cathedral.

The late Patriarch, who was born in Egypt of Damascene parents in 1823, received his early education in the Jesuit Convent of Ghazir, in the Lebanon, being subsequently admitted into the College of St. Athanasius at Rome, which he left with the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in 1851. A year later he was ordained, and returned to Alexandria.

In 1856 he was summoned to Damascus by the then Patriarch Akhimandos (Clement), and appointed as Bishop of Akka (St. Jean d'Acre) where he subsequently received from the Pope the title of Papal Visitor of the Convent of St. Saviour in the Lebanon.

In 1861, he succeeded Akhimandos as Greek Catholic Patriarch, the latter having resigned. Mgr. Gregorios visited, on different occasions, some of the principal Courts of Europe, by whose sovereigns he was received in private audience, and who conferred on him various high honorific distinctions, those of the grand cordons of the Franz Josef and Grand Officer of the Legion of Honour being among the number. He was received by His Majesty the Sultan on two occasions, and is stated to have been the first high ecclesiastical dignitary who obtained the 1st class of the Mejidié, though of late years that decoration has been much more freely bestowed on Christian Prelates.

The late Patriarch was a man of some parts and considerable intelligence who had the best interests of his community at heart by whom his loss is deeply and rightly deplored.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. S. RICHARDS.

No. 50.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received August 9.)

(No. 512.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, July 30, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Beyrout, reporting the arrival of the French ship of war "Vautour" in that port.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 50.

Consul-General Drummond Hay to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 12.)
Sir, *Beyrout, July 21, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to report the arrival at this port on the 20th instant, from Mersina, of the French torpedo gun-boat "Vautour," Captain Bonin de Rosière.

This vessel replaces the cruiser "Forbin" as "stationnaire" on the Syrian coast, and will probably remain here for about two months.

I beg to add that a French war-ship has been regularly stationed in this port during the past three months, and that no British ship has visited the Syrian coast since the departure of Her Majesty's ship "Astræa" in February last.

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. DRUMMOND HAY.

No. 51.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received August 9.)

(No. 513.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, July 30, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Damascus, reporting the state of affairs in the Hauran.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 51.

Consul Richards to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 39.)
Sir, *Damascus, July 23, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to inform your Excellency that a conflict took place about nine days ago between the Imperial troops and the Ronala Arabs at a place called Ramth, situated about 12 miles to the south of Mezerib, the present terminal station of the Beyrout–Damascus–Hauran Railway. The loss of life on either side seems to have been trifling, and, indeed, there would have been no bloodshed whatever had not the Ronalas persisted in attempting to force their way into the cultivated low-lying lands of the Hauran for the purpose of pasturing their camels and flocks, a proceeding which, for good and efficient reasons, is prohibited by Imperial order. When once these Bedouin tribes obtain a foot-hold in that part of the Hauran during the summer months, the ravages caused by their immense herds of camels, sheep, and goats are frequently of so serious a character that the very [severest ?] preventive measures become necessary in order to save the crops of the Haouranese.

Sattam Pasha, the Chief of the Ronalas, had been invited by the Mutessarif of the Hauran to meet him at Sheikh Sa'ad, the local seat of government, in order, nominally, to discuss this and other matters, but in reality with a view to his arrest and dispatch as prisoner to Damascus. The Arab Sheikh seems to have got wind of

this treacherous scheme in time to effect his escape shortly before the collision occurred between his tribe and the Turkish troops.

I am informed that a small cavalry force, consisting of 200 troopers—100 from Damascus and the remainder from Dennum, a place lying about 12 miles to the south of the city—was dispatched to the Hauran last night.

As regards the much-debated question of conscription amongst the Druses of the Hauran, it would appear that some conscripts have already been put on the roll at Suelat and in the neighbouring villages, but they failed to put in an appearance when summoned, and are, in consequence, described officially as "zegriyyé," or, "men serving under compulsion." It is very doubtful how far the measure will be successful if generally applied, and it certainly is impolitic, to say the least of it, to enforce conscription on the Druses, who are certainly not Moslems, whatever else they may be, while the Hauran Mahommedans and Bedouin Arabs are exempted from this most onerous duty, which, were the religious test applied, as elsewhere, would be obligatory.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. S. RICHARDS.

No. 52.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received August 9.)

(No. 514.)
My Lord, *Therapia, July 30, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to report that it is officially announced that Reshid Bey, member of the Council of State (Civil Division) has been appointed Vali of Beyrout.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

No. 53.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received August 9.)

(No. 515.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, July 31, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Damascus, respecting the proposed enrolment of Druses as conscripts.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 53.

Consul Richards to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 35.)
Sir, *Damascus, July 19, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to report to your Excellency that very considerable activity is being shown here by the military authorities in connection with the enrolment of those conscripts whose term of service begins this year. Whereas hitherto one "Mejliss" or Council has been considered sufficient for the performance of the duties of calling out, examining and registering those who are liable to military service, this year three such "mejlisses" have been constituted for the more rapid and expeditious fulfilment of these somewhat arduous duties.

As regards the Druses of the Hauran I am informed by the Mushir, Abdullah Pasha, that it is the intention of the Government to insist upon their liability to conscription, and although they are credibly reported as saying that they are ready to perform their military duties provided that the Hauranese Moslems and Bedouin Arabs be declared equally liable to conscription, I have reason to believe that they will do all in their power to resist the introduction of this innovation even

though their terms (so to speak) be accepted. Whether this resistance will assume an overt or covert character, depends chiefly on the state of things political generally in the course of the next few months, Turkey's difficulty being ever the Druses' opportunity and *vice versâ*.

I am also informed that the Hauranese Moslems have made overtures to the Druses with a view to obtain their co-operation against the common enemy, advances which have been rejected by the Druses on the ground that they had been deceived once already by the Hauranese, who had left them in the lurch at the critical moment, the result being that Druse blood was shed in abundance, while the Hauranese adopted the attitude of passive spectators. "Let them, too, suffer in the good cause," and the Druses would, perhaps, reconsider their decision.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. S. RICHARDS.

No. 54.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received August 9.)

(No. 517.)
My Lord, *Therapia, August 2, 1897.*

I HAVE received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Diabekir an application for leave to make a journey in the Palu district, which has not been visited by a British Consular Officer for some time past, and I have accordingly given Mr. Waugh the necessary authority.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

No. 55.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received August 9.)

(No. 518.)
My Lord, *Therapia, August 2, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copies of two despatches which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Damascus, reporting on the arrest of the alleged members of the Young Turkey Party in Syria.

I have already informed your Lordship, in my despatch No. 504 of the 28th ultimo, that Hassan Pasha had been dismissed from the post of Vali of Damascus and Nazim Pasha appointed to succeed him.

I have since received a telegram from Mr. Richards stating that Essad Effendi, Director of the Régie, who was denounced as the President of the Syrian branch of the Young Turkey Party, has been exiled to Tripoli in Barbary.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 55.

Consul Richards to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 37. Confidential.)
Sir, *Damascus, July 20, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to report to your Excellency on the recent occurrence of an incident which is likely to have somewhat serious consequences.

About a fortnight ago a certain Zutfi Effendi, Lieutenant of cavalry stationed in Beyrout, had a quarrel in a café in that town with two other officers, in the course of which swords were drawn and, a fight ensuing, Zutfi Effendi wounded one of his adversaries, but being subsequently overpowered, was disarmed, and put under arrest. The cause of the quarrel is stated to have been the objection taken by his

comrades to some scurrilous remarks made by the prisoner with reference to a portrait of the Sultan which was hanging on one of the walls of the room in which the three men were seated. Zutfi Effendi was interrogated, and admitted, in the course of the inquiry, that he belonged to the Young Turkey Party, but he added that he saw the error of his ways, and was ready to inform against others who, whether in Beyrout or Damascus, belonged to the same party. He mentioned by name two officers belonging to the Beyrout garrison, Captains Abni Effendi and Ryamil Effendi, as having on one occasion taken part in a treasonable conversation with him together with a third person, also an officer, whose name I have been unable to obtain. The persons denounced were summoned before Nazim Pasha, the Vali of Beyrout, who was presiding over this inquiry, and interrogated as to the charge which had been brought against them, but they all three strenuously maintained that it was absolutely without any foundation. Zutfi Effendi then declared that he would furnish a list of all the principal members of the Syrian branch of the Young Turkey Party, which he proceeded to do, naming as its President, Essad Effendi, Director of the Régie in this province, and Ghalib Bey Muméiz (Chief Clerk) in the Commissariat Department of the 5th Army Corps. At this juncture, Zutfi Effendi was sentenced to five months' imprisonment for having seriously wounded a comrade, and by order of the Palace, was transferred to Damascus, where he is now in gaol. At the same the Vali of Syria and the Mushir Abdullah Pasha were instructed to inquire closely into Zutfi's allegations, and to report at once to Constantinople the result of their investigations. Abdullah Pasha held an inquiry first, probably on account of the fact that the prisoner and informer is an officer under his command, the result being that the name of Ghalib Bey, who is a protégé of the Mushir, disappeared from the *procès-verbal*, as the alleged Vice-President of the Young Turkey League, its place being taken by that of Kuweteizadé Murad Effendi, a member of the Council of Administration (Idaré Mijliss) of this city. Other persons denounced by Zutfi are Mohammed Pasha, President of the Municipality (Réiss-el-Beledéyye), his brother, Khalil Pasha, Abdurrahman Pasha, Mohafiz-el-Haj (conductor or guardian of the pilgrimage), and many others belonging to some of the first Moslem families in Syria. Many officers who are stationed in Damascus were denounced, a fact which appears to have been most displeasing to the Mushir, who does his best to ignore it. The Vali subsequently held his inquiry, and, I am informed, was by no means favourably impressed either by the informer or the nature and credibility of his relations. However, he summoned into his presence all the Presidents of the Damascus Tribunals and submitted to them the *procès-verbal* of all that had transpired during the inquiry, asking them if they considered that there was sufficient evidence on which to proceed criminally against the persons denounced by Zutfi. They replied unanimously in the negative. Subsequently, they were summoned before the Mushir, and on his questioning them on this point, made a similar reply. This appears to have greatly enraged the Mushir, who is reported as absolutely convinced of the truth of Zutfi's statements, though conscious of the difficulty, if not impossibility of proving them. At this juncture, five days ago the Mushir sent to the Vali and proposed that Essad Effendi should be arrested and his house searched by the police, a proposition to which the Vali took strenuous objection on the ground of the absolute illegality of such a measure, the evidence against Essad Effendi being of the flimsiest nature. A warm discussion ensued between the two high functionaries, in the course of which the Vali declared that he would rather resign his post of Governor-General than be a party to such inquisitorial, not to say tyrannical proceedings as those contemplated and proposed by the Mushir. The latter appears to have been much provoked by certain expressions which dropped from Hassan Pasha, whom he told that he would communicate at once with the Palace and lodge a complaint against him, to which the Vali retorted that he might do as he pleased, as he himself was laying the whole matter before the Sultan. This brought the discussion to a close, the two officials retiring each to his department to report at length to the Palace.

Abdullah Pasha is undoubtedly a very ambitious man, and being of a proud unyielding disposition, is constantly coming into collision with the Vali, with whom he has had two or three quarrels already.

I am informed that the Mushir aspires to the Governor-Generalship of this province, and even to the post of Minister of War, should Hassan Pasha be maintained in office. The latter who is, of course, aware of these aspiratives is not unnaturally provoked by them, and the consequence is an extreme state of tension in the mutual relations of these two functionaries, each of whom feels that the other must be forced to leave the province, his own position being otherwise untenable.

As regards Essad Effendi, I should state that he was an ardent disciple of Midhat Pasha, and subsequently a "Muradiste," whose views being well known at the capital, he was exiled to this province about fifteen years ago, where at one time he was Chief of the Police. In this capacity he showed himself to be a man of no mean abilities, considerable energy, and great resources, the state of the public security during his term of office being quite remarkable. He was subsequently appointed Director of the Régie, from which post he was dismissed through the influence of the late Vali, Osman Nouri Pasha, being, however, reinstated after the recall of the latter. I will merely add that I have no doubt whatever that Essad Effendi is a very prominent and active member of the Young Turkey Party.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. S. RICHARDS.

Inclosure 2 in No. 55.

Consul Richards to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 38. Confidential.)
Sir, *Damascus, July 23, 1897.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 37 of the 20th instant, I have the honour to inform your Excellency that the two officers mentioned in that despatch, viz., Captains Avni Effendi and Kyamil Effendi, have been arrested, tried, and sentenced by court-martial to one month's imprisonment—not, however, for being, as stated by the informer Lutfi, members of the Young Turkey Party, but for having gone from Damascus to Beyrout without leave. I should say here that these officers are quartered here, and not at Beyrout, as incorrectly stated in my previous despatch. Three other persons have also been arrested in connection with this affair, viz., a Captain Sakib Effendi; an army druggist, Nazim Effendi; and a Lieutenant, Mahmoud Agha—all belonging to the Beyrout garrison, and all accused by the informer Lutfi of being active members of the Young Turkey Party, an allegation which they most positively and persistently deny.

Essad Effendi has made a most earnest and energetic appeal, by telegraph, to the Sultan, imploring His Majesty to allow him a fair trial in open Court should it be his intention to proceed against him in consequence of Lutfi's accusation, and he (Essad) appears to be sanguine that his appeal will have the desired effect.

In the meantime, there can be no doubt that the matter is viewed in a serious light at the Palace, because some eighteen Egyptians have been sent away from Damascus—thirteen last night and five two or three days previously—in pursuance of imperial orders to that effect, the persons in question, who appear to be all men of birth and breeding, being accused of belonging to the Young Turkish Party. I am informed on good authority that this order was in consequence of the telegraphic representations of Nazim Pasha, the Vali of Beyrout, who is supposed to have obtained his information from Lutfi the informer.

The state of tension still continues between the Vali and the Mushir, and though it is maintained by some that the former is likely to carry the day in the matter of the proposed arrests, personally I am not so sure that this will be the case, as the Mushir is a very determined man, who has a good friend in the Palace in the person of Abou'l Rhuda, who, I have no doubt, will do everything in his power to help him.

On the other hand, if it be true, as reported, that the Mushir has recently caused his name to be mentioned from the pulpit by the Imam of the El-Boyha Mosque here, immediately after and in conjunction with that of the Sultan, on two successive Fridays, he would really appear to be losing his head, and in that case his fall may be considered as imminent.

Whether this extraordinary story be true or not I cannot say, but that the accusation has been launched against Abdullah Pasha in a telegram to the Palace I know for a fact, and I may also say, that I have been shown a list of names belonging, I was informed, to persons who were present in the mosque at the time, and heard the Imam pray for the long life and prosperity of the Mushir, as stated.

It is a curious fact that a somewhat similar accusation was brought against Midhat Pasha when he was Vali of Syria, and one which, when brought home to him, contributed as much as anything else to his recall.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. S. RICHARDS.

No. 56.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received August 9.)

(No. 519.)
My Lord, *Therapia, August 3, 1897.*

I AM compelled reluctantly to abandon all hope that the real perpetrators of the last two organized massacres in Asia Minor—namely, those of Eghin and Tokat—will be brought to justice.

Your Lordship is aware of the circumstances which attended these two savage outbreaks, and of the steps which I have not ceased to take independently, and in co-operation with my colleagues, to bring about the punishment of the guilty parties.

I venture, however, to recapitulate them briefly.

The Eghin massacre took place in September last. Alarmed at the reports of bloodshed from all parts of Kurdistan, the leading Armenians of Eghin had sought to purchase their safety by paying blackmail to the Kurdish tribes of the Dersim, and by surrendering the weapons of the Armenian community to the Turkish authorities. But the net was closing round them. A band of the leading Turkish officials had long coveted the wealth of the Christian inhabitants of the town. Hakki Effendi, a man after their own heart, was appointed Governor, and entered zealously into their plans. Troops were summoned to assist in the work of slaughter, and the inhabitants of the neighbouring Kurdish villages assembled by invitation, on the heights above the Armenian quarter. At the appointed hour the massacre began, the troops at first looking on impassively, then joining forces with the mob.

It was late on the second day when quiet was restored. The Christian community was annihilated, their settlement razed to the ground, and their property divided among the authors of the plot.

The full details did not reach me till June, but it was from the first apparent that a great crime had been committed, and I caused immediate representations to be made to the Porte, urging as strongly as I could the necessity of an investigation and the deplorable conclusions which could not fail to be drawn by public opinion throughout Europe if the organizers of the massacre were allowed to escape punishment.

Towards the end of April, in consequence of notice being given in Parliament of a question to be asked on the 27th of that month as to whether any answer had been received to the Memorandum which I had presented to the Porte on the 17th December last, I instructed Mr. Block to demand a categorical reply by that date as to whether or not it was intended to take any action at Eghin. In answer to his communication he received a written assurance from the Secretary-General of the Turkish Foreign Office stating that "the Porte has ordered that a searching inquiry should be held at once to establish the responsibility of each and everyone, and to punish severely those who shall be proved to have abused their authority."

It appears that hereupon the Vali of the Province of Kharput was instructed to report; but, as Mr. Fontana has pointed out, it was of course hopeless to expect a disclosure of the truth from a set of officials all in a greater or less degree implicated in the crime they were to investigate.

On the 5th June the Porte communicated a curt note stating that their "inquiry" had shown that the disorders had been provoked by the Armenians themselves, and that the Kurds had not attacked the town. It was added that the persons proved guilty had been punished according to law; that Hakki Effendi had been recalled, and that other officials who had abused their authority would be likewise removed.

I abstained at the time from sending your Lordship a copy of this offhand communication. It was difficult to take it seriously, and Tewfik Pasha assured Mr. Block that it was not to be regarded as the final answer to the more detailed accusations which about this time I was enabled by Mr. Fontana's later reports to bring against the officials of Eghin.

But no notice has been taken of Mr. Fontana's charges, and I now inclose a copy of the note of the 5th June, as showing the only answer vouchsafed to a series of representations extending over nine or ten months.

In point of fact there has been no inquiry except by the guilty parties themselves, and my repeated demands for investigation at the hands of Hassan Fehmi's Commission, on the completion of its work at Tokat, have been contemptuously ignored. It is evident that the criminals were fully justified in relying upon the connivance, if not the open approval, of their official superiors at Constantinople.

The facts reported in Mr. Fontana's despatch No. 24, of the 19th May, forwarded in copy to your Lordship in my despatch No. 387 of the 8th June, supply a sufficient answer to the Turkish note. In it he gives, on Moslem authority, an account of the plot which led to the massacre, names the guilty officials concerned in it, and relates the part taken by each in the events of the 14th and 15th September.

I was able to inform your Lordship in my despatch No. 458 of the 8th July, that a Turkish translation of Mr. Fontana's despatch, which I had given the Foreign Minister for communication to the Sultan, had been duly laid before His Majesty. There has been no sign, however, of any intention to investigate the facts brought to light by the visit of Her Majesty's Vice-Consul to the scene of the massacre.

It is indeed doubtful whether any Turkish inquiry, however full, would have succeeded in fixing the guilt of the massacre upon those who really instigated it. Such, at least, is the conclusion to which the proceedings of Hassan Fehmi's Commission at Tokat inevitably point.

The massacre which has been the subject of the investigations of this Commission occurred, as your Lordship is aware, on the 19th March. As at Eghin the neighbouring villagers were summoned to take part in the attack. Full warning had reached the Governor. The usual patrol, however, was suppressed on the day fixed for the assault. Armed groups gathered in the streets unmolested. After being encouraged to open their shops the Armenians were mercilessly cut down. Eight hours elapsed before an order was sent to the troops to stay their hand and restore tranquillity. The Consular reports from the spot leave little doubt that the Turkish notables, both military and civil, either actively participated in the onslaught or stood by without raising a hand to arrest it. It was late in the afternoon when a tardy order was issued to the troops to stay the work of slaughter and pillage.

This massacre aroused much more indignation in Europe than that of Eghin, and in demanding a full investigation I was supported by all the other Representatives of the Great Powers. I have already reported to your Lordship in my despatch No. 207 of the 25th March the words in which I brought the matter before the Turkish Foreign Minister. I did not hesitate to declare my conviction that these events were encouraged in the highest quarters, and I pointed to the effect which a renewal of the massacres could not fail to produce upon the action of Europe with regard to this country.

Our demand for an investigation was in this case successful. Hassan Fehmi Pasha, Chief of the Customs, was dispatched on the 26th March to Tokat, to preside over the Special Tribunal, which was charged with the task of punishing the guilty, including "all the officials, high and low," who should be proved to have neglected their duties.

The Governor of Tokat and the Chiefs of Gendarmerie and Police were removed from their offices without waiting for the arrival of the special Judges. The Vali of the province was suspended.

Arrangements were made for Major Bulman, British Vice-Consul at Sivas, and the Russian Vice-Consul from Samsun to watch the sittings on behalf of the Powers.

It is disappointing to note that this show of zeal in the interest of justice has led to wholly incommensurate results. Of the 115 persons tried by the Special Tribunal, fifty-one were acquitted, nineteen were sentenced to death, and some forty-six others to terms of imprisonment varying between one and fifteen years.

But the deposed Governor was successfully screened, though it was shown that he had previous knowledge of what was impending, and took no steps to prevent it. All the other Government officials were likewise acquitted. Those who were convicted belong almost without exception to the lowest ranks of the community. Major Bulman reports that no one believes that the prisoners will be kept long in confinement, and those condemned to death are not at all likely to suffer the penalty of their crime.

My colleagues have joined me in pressing repeatedly for a confirmation of the death sentence, but evasive answers were invariably returned. I have been recently informed, however, by one of my colleagues that his Dragoman had elicited a declaration from the Chief Secretary to the Porte to the effect that the sentences of imprisonment would be carried out, but that, with regard to the capital sentences, the Sultan did not think that it would be safe to have them executed in the present excited state of public opinion. His Majesty would consider the matter later, but he wished to point out that many Armenians who had committed atrocious crimes last year had been pardoned at the request of the Powers, and he thought it might be considered an act of injustice if the same clemency was not now shown to the Mussulmans at Tokat.

In spite of repeated requests to the Foreign Minister to be informed whether this declaration is a correct statement of the views of His Imperial Majesty, I have not as yet received any formal notice of the above decision, but there is no reason to doubt that it represents the Sultan's attitude on the question, and that the remission by Imperial authority of the sentences passed at Tokat will afford another proof of the impunity with which Moslem attacks on Christian communities are allowed to be prepared and perpetrated by Turkish civil and military officials, and the mob under their control.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 56.

Memorandum.

L'ENQUÊTE effectuée au sujet de l'incident d'Eghin, mentionné dans le *pro-mémoire* de l'Ambassadeur de Sa Majesté Britannique, a établi que les désordres qui y sont survenus avaient été provoqués par les Arméniens eux-mêmes et que les Kurdes ne se sont point livrés à l'assaut de la ville. Néanmoins Hakki Effendi, qui exerçait à cette époque les fonctions de Caïmacan *ad interim*, a été déjà révoqué, et les ordres nécessaires ont été donnés à qui de droit pour le remplacement du Président de la Municipalité et des autres fonctionnaires qui avaient abusé de leurs pouvoirs. Les personnes dont la culpabilité a été établie par l'enquête ont été également punies suivant la disposition de la loi.

No. 57.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received August 9.)

(No. 525.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, August 5, 1897.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 475 of the 16th July, on the subject of the tax levied on the cattle imported for relief purposes from Persia, I have the honour to state that I now learn from the Sublime Porte that, though the Council of Ministers had decided to remit the tax, and had submitted a "mazbata" to this effect to the Palace, the Sultan had not as yet, though the matter had again been brought to His Majesty's notice, issued an Iradé sanctioning the proposal of his Ministers.

I shall continue to press for the issue of the promised instructions to the local authorities.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

No. 58.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received August 10.)

(No. 515.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, August 10, 1897, 12·45 P.M.*

I RECEIVED a visit yesterday from the Armenian Patriarch, who informed me that he was being threatened by the Armenian revolutionists for being too subservient to the Government, and that he was very apprehensive that they were preparing a fresh movement; he feared the consequences would be serious unless something could be done to satisfy them.

The fact of this communication coinciding with the renewal of disorders in the Van district, seems to show that the Armenian Committee in London and elsewhere are resuming their activity.

No. 59.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received August 10.)

(No. 516.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, August 10, 1897, 12·50 P.M.*

THE following official account of the events in the Van district reported to your Lordship on the 8th instant in my telegram No. 513, has been communicated to me to-day by Captain Elliot:—

"Revolutionists have crossed the frontier near Bashkale and Perigri in two bodies numbering 2,000 each. A third band was expected to cross at Serai. Fighting with Hamidie Kurds has continued at Perigri for two days. It is not yet known what was the result. At dawn on Friday the revolutionists attacked the camp of Shereef Bey near Bashkale, taking it completely by surprise and killing and barbarously mutilating men, women, and children.

"On the arrival of reinforcements fighting was resumed until the revolutionists at last withdrew on Saturday evening into Persian territory.

"The losses on the Turkish side amounted to 171 killed and seventy-eight wounded mostly women and children, while of the revolutionists sixty-three were killed. A Russian officer and some Mussulmans in Persian uniform have been found among the dead.

"All the time there was a large Persian force in the vicinity, and before the attack the Armenians were encamped close to it. The Persian Commander, however, paid no attention to a request from the Turkish authorities to prevent the Armenians from re-crossing the frontier."

Captain Elliot believes this account to be substantially true, but, being obliged to remain at Van, owing to the state of feeling there, he is unable to verify the facts.

He continues as follows:—

"Shemsi Pasha is doing all he can to prevent reprisals on the Armenians, and I have every confidence in him, but the Mushir, Zekki Pasha, of Erzinghian, in the hope, no doubt, of a general massacre, is endeavouring to thwart him.

"I will report daily to your Excellency until quiet is restored."

No. 60.

Mr. C. Hardinge to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received August 11.)

(No. 43.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Gulhek, August 11, 1897.*

WITH reference to your Lordship's telegram No. 17:

I had received a report which tallies with the information given by Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van, of punitive measures taken by the Persian Government against Shekaki Kurds, on account of this tribe having annihilated a small body of Persian

troops. A good many Armenian refugees as well as revolutionaries asked permission to join the expedition, and were permitted to do so.

I am informed on the other hand by Consul-General Wood that quite recently the Armenian revolutionaries crossed the frontier without opposition, and I am making further inquiries as to this.

(Sent to Constantinople.)

No. 61.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received August 11.)

(No. 521.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, August 11, 1897, 8 P.M.*

DISTURBANCES in Van district: my telegram No. 516, of yesterday.

Captain Elliot telegraphs that the city of Van is at present quiet.

No. 62.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received August 12.)

(No. 522.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, August 12, 1897, 10·30 A.M.*

HER Majesty's Vice-Consul at Bitlis telegraphed on the 10th instant as follows:—

"Arms are being distributed to the Hamidieh in Melasgir and Boulanik. Yesterday sixty men and six mountain guns left Bitlis, their supposed destination being Bashkale; two battalions have also been sent from Mush."

I have informed Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum.

No. 63.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received August 13.)

(No. 526.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, August 12, 1897, 7·50 P.M.*

THE Grand Vizier states that the Armenian revolutionaries, whose raid into Turkish territory I reported in my telegram No. 516 of the 10th instant, have withdrawn across the Persian frontier. Their number, he says, is reckoned at 1,800, of whom 200 were mounted. The Persian authorities had probably no force sufficient to cope with them. At all events they did not endeavour to stop them.

His Highness states that every precaution is being taken to prevent reprisals on the Armenians of the Province of Van for the losses caused by the raid, and that special orders have been sent to insure the safety of the Nestorian population.

No. 64.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received August 13.)

(No. 527.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, August 13, 1897, 11 A.M.*

CAPTAIN ELLIOT telegraphs from Van under yesterday's date as follows:—

"There is intense indignation against Persia. The steps taken by the Vali are excellent; in the Bazaar the shops have been open every day.

"I have been informed by the Vali that seventeen battalions, a regiment of cavalry, and one mountain battery, are shortly expected here. All classes of reserves have been called out."

(Teheran and Erzeroum informed.)

No. 65.

The Marquess of Salisbury to Mr. C. Hardinge.

(No. 18.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Foreign Office, August 13, 1897, 1 P.M.*

A TELEGRAM has been received from Her Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople reporting that, according to the statement of the Turkish Government, the Armenian revolutionists, who numbered 1,800 and of whom 200 were mounted, have withdrawn across the Persian frontier, and that no attempt was made by the Persian authorities to stop them.

No. 66.

Mr. Adam to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received August 14.)

(No. 220.)
My Lord, *Manchester, Massachusetts, August 5, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith an extract from the "Boston Herald" of the 4th instant,* stating that Mr. Angell, the newly-appointed United States' Minister to Turkey, has been furnished with instructions to insist on the payment of an indemnity for "outrages committed during the massacres at Harpoot and Marash" two years ago.

I have, &c.
(Signed) C. F. FREDERICK ADAM.

No. 67.

Mr. C. Hardinge to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received August 14.)

(No. 44.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Gulhek, August 13, 1897.*

WITH reference to my telegram No. 43, I have received confirmation of the report that Armenian revolutionaries crossed Turkish frontier. I am informed by Consul-General Wood that the revolutionaries have since returned to Salmas, and that orders have been issued that all who joined in violation of Turkish soil should be expelled from Persian territory.

(Repeated to Constantinople.)

No. 68.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received August 14.)

(No. 528.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, August 14, 1897, noon.*

MR. CROW reported from Bitlis yesterday as follows:—

"The Kurds of the six vilayets are said to be preparing a general rising, and to be inviting the Armenians to join forces with them against the Government. An Armenian came to the Consulate yesterday bringing me a verbal message from a Kurdish Chief of Bitlis, named Ali Aga of Heavris, who was at the palace twenty years, but is now in exile. He sent to beg that English aid and sympathy might be extended to the movement, but I refused to have anything to do with him."

(Erzeroum informed.)

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* Not printed.

No. 69.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received August 15.*)

(No. 531.)
(Telegraphic.) F. *Constantinople, August* 15, 1897, 10·25 P.M.

I HAVE just received the following telegram from Mr. Graves at Erzeroum, dated yesterday:—

"Two battalions of infantry left for Toutakh on the 8th instant, and two regiments of field artillery are said to have been ordered to proceed either to the same destination or perhaps to Van, within a few days.

"I have also been told that on the 12th instant orders arrived from Constantinople for the mobilization of the 1st-class reserves of the Erzeroum districts."

I have repeated the above to Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van.

No. 70.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received August 16.*)

(No. 529.) *Constantinople, August* 6, 1897.
My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Jeddah reporting the proposed erection of barracks at Tayif.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 70.

Consul Devey to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 64.) *Jeddah, June* 26, 1897.
Sir,

I HAVE the honour to inform your Excellency that it is proposed to build large barracks at Tayif to accommodate seven battalions.

It is curious to remark that all the leading inhabitants of Jeddah are being called upon to provide timbers for the construction at once, in numbers of 200 downwards according to their means, a demand which does not admit of refusal; and, no doubt, similar forced contributions are being levied at Mecca and Tayif.

I may mention that, during the sixteen years I have been in Turkey, I have never yet remarked, among the many forced loans and contributions raised for various purposes, any local subscription of this particular nature for building barracks, nor even for purposes of special national defence, such as building forts, the Military Department being invariably supplied with sufficient funds for such purposes.

Presumably, however, there are two reasons for appealing to the inhabitants on this occasion: (1) financial stress at Constantinople; and (2) the fact that traders and the leisured classes will profit from the greater security to this neighbourhood whenever a considerable garrison shall be permanently established at Tayif, and the Mecca road and neighbourhood dominated from both ends.

To have decided on Mecca itself for the site of the barracks would have been open to the serious objection of unhealthiness for the men.

I have, &c.
(Signed) G. P. DEVEY.

No. 71.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received August 16.*)

(No. 532.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, August* 6, 1897.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 490 of the 26th ultimo, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van respecting the state of affairs in the Hekkiari district.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 71.

Captain Elliot to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 37.)
Sir, *Van, July* 20, 1897.

I HAVE the honour to return herewith the correspondence, the subject of which has been dealt with in my despatches Nos. 31 to 34.

I have advised Mar Shimun always to lay his complaints before the Vali in the first instance.

This he is now doing.

Should anything further occur worthy of notice it will be reported.

I propose to visit the country of the Christian Ashirets in Hekkiari a month or two hence if your Excellency approves. I did not visit that part of the country last June.

So far it seems there are no Russian priests at Kochannes. The man I referred to in my despatch No. 33 appears to be a native of Jelu, who has returned to his home there after a long stay in Russia.

According to accounts from Urmia, the Russian priests there appear to be very active. They promise protection to all who join the Orthodox Church, and have secured many converts.

I have, &c.
(Signed) G. S. ELLIOT.

No. 72.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received August 16.*)

(No. 533.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, August* 6, 1897.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 513 of the 30th ultimo, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Damascus reporting further concerning affairs in the Hauran.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 72.

Consul Richards to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 41.)
Sir, *Damascus, July* 26, 1897.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 39 of the 23rd instant, I have the honour to report to your Excellency that a considerable number of the Hauranese (Mahommedans) have retreated to the Ledja, with a view to avoid the conscription, which it is now the intention of the military authorities to enforce among them, as well as among the Druses and those of the Bedouin Arabs, who are only, so to speak, periodically nomadic, and who are to be found for the greater part of the year in the Hauran.

The Mushir who gave me this latter piece of information, also assured me that he had no fear that the action of the Hauranese would cause the Government any serious trouble, as the Ledja being a barren and inhospitable country, the extreme difficulty, if not absolute impossibility, of sustaining life therein for any length of time would soon force the emigrants to return to their own country.

As regards the Druses of the Hauran, his Excellency informed me that ninety-four conscripts have already been enrolled from among them, and he appeared to think, or, at all events, wished it to be thought that no further difficulties would be likely to arise in that quarter. This rose-coloured view of the situation, however, is by no means in accord with what I hear from other persons who should be well informed, and I shall be greatly surprised if the much-debated conscription question is so easily and quietly solved.

With reference to the recently reported attempt of the Rouala Arabs to force their way into the Hauran, I should state that Husrev Pasha, the Officer Commanding the Gendarmerie of this province, who had been sent by the Vali to arrest this forward movement, has just returned, so that it would appear that no immediate complications are apprehended by the military authorities in that quarter.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. S. RICHARDS.

No. 73.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received August 16.)

(No. 530.)
Therapia, August 9, 1897.

My Lord,

MR. CROW, who returned to Bitlis on the 7th August, reports that two battalions of mountain artillery have been sent there in order to awe the Modeki Kurds pending the surrender of those concerned in recent disturbances.

Two sons of Hadji Nejmeddin have been imprisoned, and guarantees have been received from the latter for his good behaviour.

The Vali of Bitlis will go shortly to Malasgir, where troubles have broken out again among the Hamidié troops.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

No. 74.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received August 16.)

(No. 542.)
Constantinople, August 11, 1897.

My Lord,

WITH reference to my despatch No. 116 of the 25th June last, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul-General at Bagdad, respecting the probable retention of the Mudir of Barwarah.

I am making further representations to the Porte pressing for his removal.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 74.

Consul-General Loch to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 434.)
Bagdad, July 16, 1897.

Sir,

I HAVE the honour, with reference to your Excellency's cypher telegram dated the 25th June last, to very respectfully submit, for your Excellency's information, copy (in translation) of a further letter, No. 30, dated the 6th instant, from Mr. Nimrod Rassam, British Consular Agent, Mosul, from which it will be seen that there is every probability that the Mudir of Barwarah will retain his present post.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. LOCH, *Lieutenant-Colonel.*

Inclosure 2 in No. 74.

Mr. Rassam to Consul-General Loch.

(No. 30.)
(Translation.)
Mosul, July 6, 1897.

I HAVE had the honour of receiving your letter No. 393 dated the 26th June, 1897, informing me of receipt by you of a telegram from Her Britannic Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople, intimating the issue of an Order from the Minister of the Interior for dismissal of the Mudir of Barwarah, and directing me to report when that Order is carried out. In reply I have to state that the Mudir has not been dismissed, but continues holding his post, and perhaps his Excellency the Vali will not remove him on the ground of a peace being made between him (Reshid Bey) and his adversaries by Hassan Effendi, the Mudir of the Régie, who, having returned here five days ago, informed me that he has succeeded in making peace between both parties, having no room for sending troops against them, and that the troops are quartered at Amadieh, awaiting orders from the Commander-in-chief to return to Mosul. Should, however, the dismissal of the said Mudir take place hereafter, or I come to hear of any matter about him, I shall immediately report to your Honour.

No. 75.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received August 17.)

(No. 535.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, August 17, 1897, 12·30 P.M.*

AT the meeting held on the afternoon of the 14th instant, the Protocol was signed reappointing Naoum Pasha as Governor of the Lebanon.

I have informed Her Majesty's Consul-General at Beyrout.

No. 76.

Mr. C. Hardinge to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received August 18.)

(No. 47.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Gulhek, August 17, 1897.*

WITH regard to my telegram No. 44:

On account of violation of Turkish territory by Armenian revolutionaries, the following demands have been made by the Turkish Ambassador on the Persian Government:—

Offenders to be caught and punished. Families of killed and wounded to be indemnified.

Those of the military and civil authorities who were responsible for the raid to be punished. Similar occurrences to be prevented, and assurances given. The Turkish Government are to receive a formal apology.

I am informed by the Turkish Ambassador that he has received instructions to inform that, if these conditions are not accepted, friendship between Persia and Turkey will become doubtful.

Coercive measures might be taken he suggested.

I have strongly urged the acceptance of these demands of the Turkish Government on the Persian Government, as they appear moderate, and in this manner conclude this unfortunate incident, for which the Persian Government are beyond measure blameworthy. Very stringent orders have been sent, I am assured by the Foreign Office Minister, that the Armenian revolutionaries should be arrested and disarmed, and they are to be handed over to the Turkish authorities.

Instructions have been received by the Russian Chargé d'Affaires to give to the Turkish demands his support.

(Copy forwarded to Constantinople.)

No. 77.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received August 18.)

(No. 536.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, August 18, 1897, 11:20 A.M.*

CAPTAIN ELLIOT telegraphed from Van, under yesterday's date, as follows:—

"Four bands of revolutionists are said by the Armenians to be in this vilayet. There are two bodies near Perigri of unknown strength. A band of 600 is proceeding toward Hekkiari, and the fourth body, consisting of 400 men, is meditating an attack on the Kurds near Serai. Some thirty revolutionists from Persia are in the gardens intending to commence operations within a week.

"I believe these statements to be fairly correct."

I have informed Erzeroum.

No. 78.

Mr. C. Hardinge to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received August 19.)

(No. 48.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Gulhek, August 19, 1897.*

REVOLUTIONARY Armenians have been dispersed. According to Consul-General's (Tabreez) report fourteen have been caught at Salmas near Tabreez; some others have been arrested, among whom was the Treasurer of the party. Eighty or so have gone towards the frontier of Russia. The feeling against Christians on the Turkish frontier, as shown by news from all sources, is very strong. It is said that the Kurds only want a hint from Constantinople to raid in force the Persian territory. Two villages have already been raided by them and destroyed.

No. 79.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received August 20.)

(No. 541.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, August 20, 1897, 10:40 A.M.*

I RECEIVED this morning the following telegram from Her Majesty's Vice Consul at Van, dated the 19th instant:—

"Yesterday I had nothing to report.

"Bands of revolutionaries roam at will about the province.

"The useless and cowardly Hamidieh troops are beneath contempt.

"The action of the Vali is greatly hampered by the Mushir Zekki Pasha, who interferes with him, and gives orders to subordinates direct.

"My colleagues agree with me that there can be no security so long as this is allowed.

"Many influential Mussulmans are anxious to let the mob loose on the Armenians."

No. 80.

Mr. C. Hardinge to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received August 22.)

(No. 50.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Gulhek, August 22, 1897.*

WITH reference to my telegram No. 48, Consul-General of Tabreez reported the arrest of the Treasurer of the Armenian revolutionaries. Very shortly afterwards he escaped from his guards.

(Telegraphed to Constantinople.)

No. 81.

Consul-General Wood to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received August 23.)

(No. 2.)
My Lord, *Tabriz, July 1, 1897.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 1 of the 21st instant, I have the honour to transmit the copy of a despatch I have this day addressed to Her Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran, giving the latest information which has reached me regarding the establishment and the doings of the Russian Ecclesiastic Mission to the Nestorians in Urumia and Salmast.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CECIL G. WOOD.

Inclosure in No. 81.

Consul-General Wood to Mr. C. Hardinge.

(No. 3.)
Sir, *Tabriz, July 1, 1897.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 2 of the 21st June regarding the introduction into Urumia of a Russian Ecclesiastic Mission, and the unusual method with which it has opened its labours among the Nestorians, I have the honour to report, on reliable authority, that they have now obtained 11,000 signatures in the smallest districts of Urumia, and that only three Roman Catholic priests, Chaldeans naturally, and two Presbyterian preachers, have so far withheld their signatures in those parts.

In the course of general conversation a few days ago at this Consulate-General, M. Wölff, the Russian Secretary, stated most positively that the Russian Mission had strict injunctions not to offer or speak of subsequent Russian protection to be afforded to such as joined the Russian Greek Church, but, on the other hand, disinterested informants insist that such protection is the lever by which they have so successfully, and in such a short space, gathered so many adherents.

A proof of this is that the American Presbyterian Mission has lost, and is still losing, many pupils and teachers who have not hesitated to choose between comparatively high salaries given them and the future benefits to be derived from Russian protection.

The native authorities, in what may be called the invaded districts, are awakening to the danger in their midst, but, as usual, their efforts tend only to the filling of their pockets, for they are levying fines on every pretext on the Nestorians who have not yet joined the Orthodox creed before Russian protection, promised or implied, put a stop to any further hopes of profit. They are, in fact, pushing the Nestorians into the arms of the Russian Church, and abetting their alienation from their own Government.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CECIL G. WOOD.

No. 82.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received August 23.)

(No. 545.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, August 16, 1897.*

WITH reference to my telegrams No. 513 and 516 of the 8th and 10th instant respectively, I have the honour to transmit herewith two communications which I have received from the Sublime Porte respecting the incursion of Armenian revolutionists into the Vilayet of Van.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 82.

Circular from the Sublime Porte to her Representatives abroad.

IL résulte d'un télégramme du Vali *ad interim* de Van que le 6 courant quelques milliers d'agitateurs Arméniens ont passé de Perse sur notre territoire, attaqué la tribu de Mezriki et tué environ 200 personnes, parmi lesquelles se trouvent des femmes et des enfants. Ils ont, en outre, mis à mort, de la façon la plus cruelle, la femme du Chef de la tribu et ont coupé le nez et les oreilles de plusieurs de leurs victimes.

Les mesures nécessaires ont été prises par les autorités Impériales, tant pour assurer la capture de ces malfaiteurs, que pour prévenir tout incident dans le Vilayet de Van.

Nous avons demandé aussi au Gouvernement Persan, tant l'arrestation de ces rôdeurs criminels qui, poursuivis par nos troupes, chercheraient à refranchir la frontière, que l'adoption de dispositions propres à empêcher désormais le passage de révolutionnaires Arméniens sur notre territoire.

Veuillez vous énoncer autour de vous dans le sens qui précède et réfuter également toute publication erronée qui viendrait à paraître dans les journaux.

Le 8 Août, 1897.

Inclosure 2 in No. 82.

Circular from the Sublime Porte to her Representatives abroad.

Des agitateurs Arméniens ayant également passé le 7 courant en grand nombre la frontière du côté du Mont Litchan Keuy, un engagement eut lieu entre eux et les gens de la tribu de Haidernali. Des mesures ont été prises pour la capture de ces malfaiteurs.

D'après les derniers renseignements parvenus à la Sublime Porte, les agitateurs Arméniens qui avaient attaqué la tribu de Mezriki se sont livrés à des actes de cruauté des plus odieux. Ils ont crevé les yeux aux hommes et coupé les oreilles et les seins aux femmes. Au nombre de leurs victimes se trouvent 116 femmes et enfants tués et 47 blessés. Bien que, grâce aux mesures prises par les autorités Impériales, les rôdeurs soient dispersés et aient repassé la frontière, il est cependant possible qu'encouragés par l'impunité qui leur est assurée en Perse ils cherchent à renouveler leur agression. Aussi avons-nous pris des mesures propres à les en empêcher et demandé au Gouvernement Persan d'adopter de son côté des dispositions efficaces à cet effet.

Veuillez donner au contenu de ce télégramme et de ceux qui l'ont précédé la plus grande publicité.

No. 83.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received August 23.)

(No. 552.)

Therapia, August 18, 1897.

My Lord,

IN continuation of my despatch No. 459 of the 9th July, I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copies of further correspondence which has passed between the Sublime Porte and the Representatives of the Great Powers respecting the reappointment of Naoum Pasha as Governor of the Lebanon.

In the identic note to the Porte, which formed the second inclosure in my above-mentioned despatch, the Ambassadors requested to be informed as to the steps that had been taken to insure the execution of the promises contained in the Protocol of 1892, which referred to the three following points:—

1. The election of candidates for the Administrative Council.
2. The modifications introduced into the judicial organization of 1864; and
3. The nomination and dismissal of Magistrates.

The reply of the Porte was discussed at a meeting of Ambassadors, when it was decided to accept the assurances given as to the observance of the Law in regard to elections to the Administrative Council.

It was also agreed to raise no objections to the modifications of the judicial organization of 1864, which had been introduced merely with a view to assimilating the Tribunals of the Lebanon to those established throughout the Empire under the Judicial Reforms of 1877. I concurred in this course, as Her Majesty's Consul-General as well as his predecessor at Beyrout have stated their opinion that any attempt to return to the earlier organization would be inadvisable and impracticable. I would refer your Lordship on this point to the views expressed by Mr. Consul-General Drummond Hay in his despatch No. 37 of the 30th June, forwarded to your Lordship in my despatch No. 459 of the 9th July.

The Ambassadors therefore confined themselves to demanding the official communication of such modifications as had already been introduced and to placing on record their right to being previously consulted as to any further change to be effected in the Organic Statute of the Lebanon.

On the third point, namely, the removal of Magistrates, the Ambassadors pointed out that though the statement of the Sublime Porte that the Organic Statute contained no mention of any inquiry by the Administrative Council previous to dismissal, was, in point of fact, correct, yet there was a special Article inserted in the Protocol of 1892 stipulating that no Magistrate could be transferred or dismissed until after an inquiry held by the Administrative Council. These observations were embodied in an identic note which was addressed to the Porte on the 12th instant. The following day we received the reply of the Imperial Government expressing the hope that the Representatives of the Great Powers would accept the existing modifications of the judicial organization, and giving the assurance that in future no alteration shall be introduced into the terms of the Organic Statute of the Lebanon without previously obtaining their assent thereto.

In view of the satisfactory assurances contained in this note the Protocol confirming Naoum Pasha in his post as Governor of the Lebanon for a further period of five years was duly signed at Tophané on the 14th August by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Ambassadors of the Six Great Powers.

I have, &c.

(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 83.

Note Verbale.

LE Ministre des Affaires Étrangères a eu l'honneur de recevoir la note verbale que l'Ambassade de Sa Majesté Britannique a bien voulu lui adresser le 6 Juillet dernier, relativement au renouvellement du mandat de son Excellence Naoum Pacha, Gouverneur du Liban.

La Sublime Porte n'a pas manqué d'interpeler Naoum Pacha sur les observations y formulées. Il résulte de la réponse de son Excellence que:—

1. L'élection des membres du Medjliss Administratif continuant toujours à se faire suivant les conditions prescrites par le Règlement, et avec la plus complète liberté, ne saurait donner lieu à aucune objection.

2. Certaines modifications et améliorations dont la nécessité avait été démontrée par l'expérience avaient dû, en effet, être apportées à l'organisation judiciaire du Liban, c'est ainsi que le nombre des Tribunaux de Première Instance, qui était de six, a dû être porté à huit; que les Juges d'Instruction et les Procureurs ont été nommés auprès des Tribunaux, et que les dispositions ont été prises pour que les pourvois en Cassation pussent s'effectuer d'une manière régulière. Les avantages de ces modifications ont été du reste reconnus par MM. les Consuls des Puissances eux-mêmes et le retour à l'ancien système ne pourrait que provoquer de nombreuses plaintes, et donner lieu à de sérieux inconvénients. Aussi la Sublime Porte est-elle persuadée que leurs Excellences les Ambassadeurs des Puissances, dans leur appréciation éclairée et leur sollicitude pour la distribution régulière de la justice, voudront bien convenir de la nécessité de maintenir ces améliorations, et n'y soulever aucune difficulté.

3. La nomination et la révocation des Magistrats se fait strictement dans les conditions prévues par l'Article X du Règlement, qui porte que les Juges sont nommés par le Gouvernement, et l'Article XI, qui dispose que tout Magistrat ayant commis des abus ou observé une attitude illégale sera, après enquête, non seulement révoqué, mais aussi puni suivant la gravité de sa faute. Mais le Règlement ne contient aucune clause

conférant au Médjliss Administratif le droit d'effectuer lui-même les enquêtes à cet égard.

Le Ministre des Affaires Étrangères aime à espérer que leurs Excellences les Ambassadeurs des Grandes Puissances voudront bien considérer les explications qui précèdent comme satisfaisantes, et lui faire parvenir leur assentiment du renouvellement du mandat de son Excellence Naoum Pacha.

Constantinople, le 5 Août, 1897.

Inclosure 2 in No. 83.

Note Verbale.

EN réponse à la note verbale de la Sublime Porte en date du 5 Août, 1897, relative à l'application du Règlement du Liban, l'Ambassadeur d'Angleterre a l'honneur de faire observer que le Ministère Impérial des Affaires Étrangères reconnaît lui-même l'introduction dans ce Règlement de modifications importantes sans entente préalable avec les Puissances.

Dans le Protocole signé le 11 Août, 1892, pour la nomination du Gouverneur du Liban, il avait été stipulé que les Articles du Règlement modifiés sans l'assentiment des Puissances seraient rétablis.

L'Ambassadeur d'Angleterre ne méconnaît pas la nécessité de certaines modifications et améliorations, mais il insiste pour que les changements déjà opérés reçoivent l'adhésion des Puissances et pour qu'à l'avenir aucune atteinte ne soit portée à leur insu au Règlement Organique du Liban.

En ce qui concerne les garanties données aux Magistrats pour leur déplacement ou révocation, la note verbale de la Porte se borne à constater que le Règlement du Liban ne confient aucune disposition confiant aux Medjliss Administratifs le droit de procéder aux enquêtes prescrites par l'Article X.

L'Ambassadeur d'Angleterre ne l'ignore pas, mais il est obligé de rappeler à la Sublime Porte qu'à la date du 18 Juillet, 1892, les Représentants des Puissances ont remis à son Excellence Said Pacha, Ministre des Affaires Étrangères, des observations écrites réclamant pour les enquêtes relatives aux Magistrats "certaines conditions de publicité."

C'est pour satisfaire à ce désir que dans le Protocole du 15 Août suivant fut introduit, d'accord entre les Représentants des Puissances et le Ministre des Affaires Étrangères, un Article stipulant que les déplacements et révocations des Magistrats ne pourraient avoir lieu qu'après enquête faite par les soins du Medjliss Administratif.

Sur ce point le Règlement était modifié avec l'assentiment des Puissances, et l'on peut s'étonner qu'il n'ait pas été tenu compte d'un changement régulier alors que modifications irrégulièrement introduites dans le Règlement sont depuis longtemps en vigueur.

L'Ambassadeur d'Angleterre espère que le Ministre des Affaires Étrangères voudra bien reconnaître la justesse de ces observations et le mettre à même, en y donnant satisfaction, d'adhérer au renouvellement du mandat de Naoum Pacha.

Constantinople, le 12 Août, 1897.

Inclosure 3 in No. 83.

Note Verbale.

LE Ministre des Affaires Étrangères a eu l'honneur de recevoir la note verbale identique que leurs Excellences MM. les Ambassadeurs des Grandes Puissances ont bien voulu lui adresser le 12 de ce mois relativement au renouvellement des pouvoirs de son Excellence Naoum Pacha, Gouverneur du Liban.

Il croit devoir faire remarquer à leurs Excellences que les modifications apportées au Règlement du Liban n'ont point été faites par Naoum Pacha, mais qu'elles remontent à une date antérieure puisqu'elles avaient été déjà appliquées par suite des exigences locales, du temps de ses prédécesseurs.

Quoi qu'il en soit, la Sublime Porte les communiquera à MM. les Représentants des Puissances. Elle aime à espérer que ces modifications, qui sont en vigueur depuis fort de temps et dont l'opportunité avait été reconnue par MM. les Consuls des

Grandes Puissances eux-mêmes, recevront l'assentiment de leurs Excellences les Ambassadeurs, et elle s'empresse de leur donner, de son côté, l'assurance qu'aucun changement ne sera apporté à l'avenir aux dispositions des Règlements du Liban sans une entente préalable avec les Ambassades des Grandes Puissances.

La Sublime Porte prendra également les dispositions nécessaires pour l'application des mesures convenues en 1892 avec les Représentants des Grandes Puissances pour les enquêtes relatives aux Magistrats.

Dans ces conditions le Ministre des Affaires Étrangères espère que leurs Excellences MM. les Ambassadeurs n'auront pas d'objection à signer, dans la réunion qui aura lieu demain à Tophané, le Protocole relatif au renouvellement du mandat de Naoum Pacha pour une nouvelle période de cinq ans.

Constantinople, le 13 Août, 1897.

Inclosure 4 in No. 83.

Protocol.

LE terme de cinq ans fixé pour la durée des pouvoirs de Naoum Pacha comme Gouverneur du Liban expirant le 15 Août, 1897, Sa Majesté Impériale le Sultan a daigné le confirmer en cette qualité pour une nouvelle période de cinq ans.

Les Représentants des Puissances, Signataires du Règlement Organique du Liban, en date du 9 Juin, 1861, de celui du 6 Septembre, 1861, et des Protocoles du 27 Juillet, 1868, du 22 Avril, 1873, du 8 Mai, 1883, et du 15 Août, 1892, réunis en Conférence avec le Ministre des Affaires Étrangères de Sa Majesté Impériale le Sultan, ont été unanimes pour constater par le présent Protocole l'accord préalable qui, à l'occasion du renouvellement des fonctions de Naoum Pacha, s'est établi entre eux et la Sublime Porte.

Les dispositions du Protocole en date du 15 Août, 1892, sont maintenues.

En foi de quoi les Plénipotentiaires respectifs ont signé le présent Protocole et y ont apposé le sceau de leurs armes.

Fait à Constantinople, le 2 (14) Août, 1897.

(Signé) TEWFIK.
CALICE.
NÉLIDOW.
P. CAMBON.
PHILIP CURRIE.
SAURMA.
PANSA.

No. 84.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received August 23.)

(No. 583.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, August 19*, 1897.

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Jeddah, respecting the turbulence in Mecca from scarcity of provisions.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 84.

Consul Devey to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 74.)

Sir, *Jeddah, July 13*, 1897.

I HAVE the honour to report that about a fortnight ago I was informed that some shops had been plundered in Mecca, but on inquiry this report proved false. I however paid some attention to this report on account of the existing tension arising from the Quarantine Regulations which have deprived Mecca of means of

obtaining food supplies. As I have elsewhere mentioned, Mecca is entirely dependent in practice for her daily food upon this port and probably does not possess sufficient supplies to feed her present population, greatly reduced as it is through departure of pilgrims for their homes and of residents for Tayif, for more than three weeks whilst totally deficient in storehouses or magazines of provisions.

This condition naturally has produced much discontent among the people of Mecca, as the mere false rumour of shops plundered goes far to show. It was subsequently announced that some shops had indeed been pillaged in Mecca, and the natural deduction *prima facie* would be that there had been some sort of a bread riot which impression was strengthened by the receipt of one or more telegrams from Mecca contractors to their correspondents in Jeddah, to furnish no more supplies for the moment. But according to information later received it would appear that only a small disturbance took place in which some cloth was carried off from some shops which was followed by petty theft by night of rice and other food materials.

This matter, however, was quite sufficient in view of other acts of turbulence which have unfortunately been occurring in the neighbourhood during the last six weeks, to create serious alarm in Jeddah. If even a small disturbance took place in the sacred city of Mecca, there would be much less chance of immunity from riot in the port of Jeddah which, on account of plague, was the original source of most part of the trouble now afflicting the province.

As described in my Memorandum of the 8th instant, there is a very serious sense of uneasiness in this town, which is naturally experienced chiefly at the Health Office and by the Europeans and largely, also, by merchants both British Indian and Arab.

On the 11th instant I am told that an excited mob of between 400 and 500 persons collected to make a threatening demonstration before the Government House at Mecca, saying that if supplies were not at once imported in sufficient quantities, and prices reduced to their ordinary rates they would make an attack and plunder any provisions to be found. The Vali was promptly informed of this manifestation of discontent, and orders have been received here to forward provisions; food is now being sent on, to satisfy this demand and to supply the Mecca people even in preference to the needs of the garrison, but unluckily with the existing quarantine restrictions and the unsafeness of the road, only small supplies can be as yet forwarded. However, it is hoped that as the plague is now nearly extinct, communication with Mecca may be resumed and business begin to return into its normal condition within a few days time, in which case large caravans of camel would come down from Mecca to fetch the lacking provisions.

I have, &c.
(Signed) G. P. DEVEY.

No. 85.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received August 23.)

(No. 557.)
My Lord, *Therapia, August 19, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul-General at Tripoli, reporting the release of twenty-two Armenian prisoners, who had been condemned by the Extraordinary Tribunal which sat here last autumn.

Information respecting the illegal imprisonment of these men reached the French, Russian, and British Embassies in March last, and as their continued detention was in direct violation of the assurances given by the Sultan to the French Ambassador, and the general amnesty granted by His Imperial Majesty, representations were made to the Sublime Porte on the subject with the result that, as reported in Mr. Jago's despatch, all the Armenian political prisoners at Tripoli were released on the 6th instant.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Enclosure in No. 85.

Consul-General Jago to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 11.)
Sir, *Tripoli, August 7, 1897.*

REFERRING to my despatch No. 2 of the 6th March, on the subject of the twenty-two Armenian prisoners condemned by the Extraordinary Tribunal, which sat at Constantinople last autumn, and who arrived here on the 22nd February last, I have the honour to report to your Excellency that they were set at liberty last night, with the exception of one, named Abraham Kulaksizian, of Van, who had died the previous day.

With the exception of five Armenian criminals, condemned at common law, no others of this nationality remain in prison here.

I have, &c.
(Signed) THOS. S. JAGO.

No. 86.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received August 23.)

(No. 558.)
My Lord, *Therapia, August 19, 1897.*

WITH reference to my telegram No. 537 of yesterday, I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith a translation of the official report published in to-day's Turkish press of the outrages perpetrated yesterday in Constantinople.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 86.

Extract from the Turkish Press of August 19, 1897.

(Translation.)

THE following official announcement appears this morning:—

"A dynamite bomb exploded yesterday at 8 o'clock (Turkish 3 P.M.) at the Sublime Porte, on the upper floor in front of the office of the Department of the Introducteur des Ambassadeurs; some damage was caused and four porters were wounded, one of whom subsequently died. At the same time a bomb was thrown in front of the Mutessarifate at Pera, but did not explode. The offenders, two Armenians, were taken into custody. Similarly, at the same hour, an Armenian was arrested inside the Ottoman Bank with a packet containing a dynamite bomb with four fuses, which he was on the point of lighting. The three prisoners are being interrogated, and will be punished if found guilty. Thanks to the measures ordered by His Majesty, order was everywhere preserved."

No. 87.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received August 23.)

(No. 546.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, August 23, 1897, 1·45 P.M.*

I RECEIVED this morning the following telegram from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van:—

"Shemsi Pasha has been ordered to Diarbekir to take command of the Redifs.

"Munir Pasha has been appointed Acting Vali and Commander of the troops here."

No. 88.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received August 24.)

(No. 548.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, August 24, 1897, 8·5 P.M.*

I HAVE received to-day the following telegram from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van:—

"A telegram arrived late last night reinstating Shemsi Pasha as Acting Vali.

"I respectfully beg to thank your Excellency.

"The news has caused great rejoicing. Much misery and probably bloodshed averted.

"I believe that the revolutionists will now leave Van."

No. 89.

The Marquess of Salisbury to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 349.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Foreign Office, August 25, 1897, 4 P.M.*

I REQUEST your Excellency to urge the Ottoman Government to endeavour to restrain the projected Kurdish raid on the Persian frontier in accordance with the desire of the Persian Government conveyed in Mr. Hardinge's telegram No. 51 of to-day, which has been repeated to your Excellency.

No. 90.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received August 26.)

(No. 550.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, August 26, 1897, 10·30 A.M.*

I HAVE sent the following telegram to Her Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran:—

"Persian frontier. Your telegram No. 51 of the 25th instant. I have informed the Porte that we have urged the Persian Government to prevent the Kurds on their side of the frontier from attacking Turkish territory. I am pressing them to restrain Sheikh Sadik."

No. 91.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received August 30.)

(No. 560.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, August 20, 1897.*

WITH reference to my despatches Nos. 491 and 532 of the 26th July and 6th August respectively, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van, reporting on the journey of the Russian Vice-Consul at Van to Mosul, and on the supposed intention of the Nestorians to join the Orthodox Church.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 91.

Captain Elliot to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 38. Confidential.)
Sir, *Van, August 3, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge your Excellency's despatch of the 12th July, 1897, relative to the movements of the Russian Vice-Consul at Van in the Mosul Vilayet.

This inclosure I beg to return herewith.

I have already reported in previous despatches the supposed intention of the Nestorians to join the Orthodox Church and place themselves under Russian protection.

The information I possess on this subject is as follows:—

In May last the American missionaries in Urumia, Persia, reported that the Russian Vice-Consul at Van had, in the autumn of last year, visited Mar Shimum at Kochannes, and arranged with him that the Nestorians should join the Orthodox Church, and in return receive Russian protection.

At Tabriz, on the 22nd May, I heard that two Russian priests had just left that place for Urumia.

I was at Kochannes from the 20th to the 24th June. Nothing was then known of the movements of the Russian priests, though there were rumours about their intending to come into Turkey.

Mr. Browne, of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Mission, told me that Mar Shimum and the Metropolitan of the Nestorians had assured him most earnestly that they had no intention of abandoning their Church, nor did they expect any benefits from Russia.

Mr. Browne's opinion was that possibly some of Mar Shimum's relatives, who are always intriguing against him, had been conspiring to introduce Russian priests into the country.

Later news from Urumia is to the effect that two Russian priests arrived there about the end of May, and had a most enthusiastic reception from the Nestorians, which greatly incensed the local Mahommedans. These priests have since their arrival been busy enrolling Nestorians as members of the Orthodox Church, and promising Russian protection to those so enrolled. So successful have they been that Dr. Cochrane, head of the American Mission at Urumia, who proposed visiting the Van Mission last June, considered it advisable to abandon the project, in order the better to guard his flock against the temptation of the hour. I met a man I took to be a Russian priest as I was leaving Bashkala on the 1st July.

He had been a guest of the Russian Consul at Van, and is now said to be staying in Jelu (Hekkiari), at his home, he being a Nestorian who has been a long time in Russia.

I regret I am unable to give later information on this subject, but I have reason to believe that Mr. Browne's letters to me are being intercepted.

I know he has written to me at least twice by post since the 1st July, but I have not received either letter.

I am about to take steps to put myself in communication with him, and will report further if there is anything of importance to communicate.

It was reported here that when I went to Hekkiari I was the bearer of valuable presents to Mar Shimum from the British Government. The authorities appeared greatly exercised about my movements at that time.

The Russian Vice-Consul here is, I believe, a soldier, though he gives himself out as a civilian. In my opinion the chief motive of his visit to Mosul was to gain an accurate knowledge of the state of the road, supplies, &c., for military purposes, though he may also have had political work in hand as well.

About the time of his return to Van, the beginning of July, I considered the Turks apprehended an attack by Russia, and were disposing their troops accordingly, although the pretext was that they wished to have them in a central position to deal with either Kurds or Armenian revolutionists.

The Russian Consul denied all knowledge of any intention to send Russian priests among the Nestorians. He did not return through Julamerk. He was away from Van for three months, April to July.

I have, &c.
(Signed) G. J. ELLIOT.

No. 92.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received August* 30.)

(No. 569.)
Constantinople, August 26, 1897.

My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Kharput, transmitting a list of Armenian girls abducted at Hakim Han.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 92.

Vice-Consul Fontana to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 34.)
Kharput, August 9, 1897.

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith to your Excellency a list containing the names of eleven Armenian girls of Hékim Han abducted by Moslems—whose names are also specified—at the time of the massacre in that village, and who are still retained, it appears, by their abductors.

I have handed a translation of the list in question to the Defterdar, who is now acting in the place of the Vali, and he has referred it to the Mutessarif of Malatia with instructions to take action thereupon and report the result.

I have, &c.
(Signed) RAPHAEL A. FONTANA.

Inclosure 2 in No. 92.

List of Armenian Girls abducted by Moslems at Hékim Han during the Disturbances there, and still held by them.

Name.	Age.	By whom abducted.
Heropsimé, daughter of Chil Agob Oglou Agob ..	16	Cadi Oglou Umer Osman.
Zarkur, wife of Mugherditch Toros Oglou Artin ..	19	Hassan Oglou Mehmet Ali.
Surpik, daughter of Serkis, son of Ohannes Kehia ..	14	Deli Mehmet.
Surpik, daughter of Khacho Oglou Kirkor ..	13	Ahmed Duran Oglou Khalil.
Akhu, daughter of Zormajt Oglou Kevork ..	14	Gon Oglou Hadji.
Anna, daughter of Nerses Oglou Manouk ..	15	Samad Oglou Osman.
Mariam, daughter of Carabet Oglou Tavid ..	8	Ali Beshir.
Vartini, daughter of Torosan Oglou Garabet ..	16	Ali, son of Meden Oglou Hadji Yusouf.
Three daughters of Bedros Oglou Sahak—		
1. Heropsimé	12	Umer Oglou Osman, son of Khalil Effendi.
2. Hurma	18	Garib Oglou Pasha.
3. Margherito	20	Kiul Ismail Oglou Ali.

No. 93.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received August* 30.)

(No. 570.)
Constantinople, August 26, 1897.

My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Kharput, reporting incidents at Eghin.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 93.

Vice-Consul Fontana to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 35.)
Kharput, August 10, 1897.

Sir,

IN connection with my despatch No. 24 of the 19th May last, I have the honour to report to your Excellency that Cara Boy, Head of the Municipality at Eghin, Hafiz Effendi, of the Administrative Council, and Khalil Effendi, Juge d'Instruction there, have now, at the Vali's orders, been dismissed from their posts.

These men, in conjunction with Bekir Chaush, of the local post-office, and other misdoers, have held meetings in the house of Cara Bey with the object of fabricating a Mazbata against the Director of that Office, Hussein Effendi (referred to in the despatch in question), imputing to him the use of disloyal language towards the Sultan. The conspirators disagreed, however, as it seems, among themselves, and have so far brought no formal charge against Hussein Effendi. But apprehension is felt for the life of that official so long as Bekir Chaush remains at Eghin.

The Bimbashi, Ibrahim Edhem Effendi, abducted an Armenian girl named Maronik (aged 17) at the time of the massacre last year, and she has since embraced Islamism. Another girl, named Mariam, is said to be also in his power. The Bimbashi has now left Eghin with his battalion for the Dersim.

The Armenian church of Venk, near Eghin, was broken into last week and robbed of several hundred liras' worth of valuables in the form of chalices, stoles, &c. According to the local newspaper, however, the thieves have been tracked and imprisoned, and the property stolen by them discovered hidden under some stones. The criminals' names are stated to be Saïb and Shevket.

I have, &c.
(Signed) RAPHAEL A. FONTANA.

No. 94.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received August* 30.)

(No. 571.)
Constantinople, August 26, 1897.

My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Damascus, reporting certain acts of violence which have occurred in the Mount Hermon and Hauran districts.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 94.

Consul Richards to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 44.)
Damascus, August 26, 1897.

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to report to your Excellency certain incidents of recent occurrence in the Mount Hermon and Hauran districts, which, though of no great importance in themselves, tend to show the state of lawlessness and unrest in which those parts of the vilayet still are.

Certain villagers of Jebatat-el-Zeit, in the Caza of Kuneitra, were recently engaged in irrigating some lands which it is alleged by the inhabitants of the neighbouring Druse village of Mejdel Shemo originally belonged to them, when they were fired upon by a party of men hailing from the latter village, the result being that one man was killed on the spot and another dangerously wounded. On news of the occurrence reaching Jebatat-el-Zeit, a number of persons set out from that village in pursuit of the assailants, who had, however, in the meantime, effected their escape. The matter having been reported to the Kaimakam of Kuneitra, he sent troops to Mejdel Shemo and had several persons arrested, nine of whom are still in prison, the rest having been released.

A caravan of Hauranese (Moslems), which was on its way to Suweideh, was recently attacked and plundered by a party of Druses from the village of Smad. The

matter having been reported to the Kaïmakam of Suweideh, he sent the Mudir of Shehba to Smad to make the necessary inquiries. The Mudir met with a very hot reception from the Druses, being driven out of the village amid a shower of stones, whereupon he wrote to the Kaïmakam and asked that soldiers might be sent to his assistance. The request was complied with, and a certain number of troops was dispatched forthwith to Smad, with two cannon, with which they proceeded to fire upon the village, the result being that one of the villagers was killed.

I am informed that troops are now being collected at Ahireh, a large village in the Lejah, with the object of attacking and destroying the village of Smad. It would appear that the Smad Druses have a very bad reputation in the matter of honesty.

A Druse and a Bedevi Arab of the Sloot tribe were travelling together on the road between Ezra and Shakra when they were met by soldiers, who fired on them, killing one and dangerously wounding the other. The head of the man who was killed was brought in and exhibited in the market-place of Bosra-el-harir. The men who were shot were, it is alleged, well-known brigands.

Husrei Pasha, the Head of the Gendarmerie of this vilayet, recently arrested and brought into Damascus an Arab who is stated to have been the comrade of a certain Zaoor, a well-known brigand.

At Inkhill, a village lying on the borders of the Jebel Druse, an attempt was recently made by the Sloot Arabs to force the inhabitants to emigrate to the Lejah. In order to bring about this result the Arabs carried off the cattle of the villagers and proceeded to drive them down into the Lejah. On their way they were met by some soldiers, who rescued the cattle from the marauders and carried them off to Suweideh. As far as is known the people of Inkhill have not, so far, recovered possession of their cattle.

While it is true that the occurrence of such incidents as the above is a clear indication as to the existence of a considerable amount of lawlessness and insecurity for life and property in parts of this province, the promptitude with which the authorities have acted in every case is equally indicative of a desire, emanating, of course, from head-quarters, to take immediate action for the punishment of evildoers, and so to prevent the commission of crime in the future. This I really believe to be the case, judging from the fact that the Vali has already taken very prompt measures in order to insure the tranquillity and security of this city by arresting and imprisoning some fifty persons who were well known to the police as men of doubtful antecedents, and suspicious characters, while twenty others have been exiled to Kerak (Moab).

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. S. RICHARDS.

No. 95.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received August 30.)

(No. 572. Confidential.)
My Lord, *Therapia, August 26, 1897.*

THE recent trial of Ali Riza, editor of the "Mechveret" newspaper in Paris, has called public attention to the proceedings of the group of politicians which, under the name of the Young Turkey party, has taken upon itself to ventilate at home and abroad the evils of the Turkish system of government.

The group has existed, though in an unorganized condition, for many years, but no serious attempt was made to put it down till within the last few years, when the increasing violence of the language held by its organs, and their direct attacks upon the character and policy of the Sultan, induced His Majesty to resort to measures of repression.

Arrests have been growing more frequent, and two successive missions were sent this year to Paris to enter into negotiations with the leaders of the party in that capital. Nothing came of the first, but it appears that the second, under Ahmed Djellaleddin Pasha, Chief of the Secret Cabinet of the Palace, has succeeded in scattering, or winning over, a considerable fraction of the group, some of whom have returned to Constantinople, while the rest are said to have been rendered harmless by the acceptance of rewards and pensions.

Ali Riza remained stubborn, and his importance has been greatly magnified by the publicity and final failure of the action brought against his journal at the instance of the Ottoman Embassy. The editor of the "Hurriet" newspaper in London was equally

obstinate. Murad Bey, however, editor of the "Mizan," and a former official of the Public Debt at Constantinople, who shared with Ali Riza the leadership of the party in Paris, was induced to join the group of penitents and to throw himself upon the mercy of his Sovereign. He arrived at Constantinople a fortnight ago. It was given out that he had extorted ample promises of reform as the price of his return, including a general amnesty, freedom of the press, Ministerial responsibility, and independent Tribunals. It is even said that he has been placed upon a Commission of Reform, under whose auspices the new era is to be inaugurated.

By the general voice of the party, however, Murad is condemned as a traitor, and the list of promises is evidently mythical.

A much more drastic campaign has been opened against the suspected adherents of the party in Constantinople.

It is credibly stated that over 1,000 persons have been lately arrested and banished, or otherwise done away with, including several of the Ulema and large numbers of military and medical students. Fourteen cadets of the Military Academy have been sentenced to death for disaffection, and were only saved from execution by the positive veto of the Minister of War. Sadi Bey, a prominent sympathiser, narrowly escaped banishment to a distant Governorship. The Vali of Damascus was recalled on suspicion of connivance with the agents of the party. Increased energy is displayed to prevent the import and dissemination of foreign books and newspapers, and a complete state of panic prevails among the remnant of the Young Turks in the capital and provinces who have hitherto escaped detection.

It would be a mistake to confound with the mass of the malcontents, against whom these attacks are levelled, the much more weighty, though numerically insignificant, body, which is sometimes spoken of as the Reform or Constitutional party. Among the latter are to be found not a few men of the highest rank who, while occupying important offices of trust under the Sultan, have not shrunk from pointing out to His Majesty the danger of the courses upon which he has embarked.

Any hope of an improvement of Turkish methods of administration from within must rest upon the influence of statesmen of this stamp. They are opposed to violence of language or action, and have not yet abandoned all hopes of bringing about a reform by constitutional methods, provided they can obtain extraneous support, and especially that of England. The burden of their complaint is the impotence of the Turkish Ministers under the present system, and the complete absorption of the functions of Government in the hands of a Palace clique. I have the honour to inclose a Memorandum recording a conversation with a leading Mollah, which throws much light upon their opinions and objects.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 95.

Memorandum.

THE opinions set forth in the present Memorandum are those of a very well known Mollah, who is probably about the best specimen of his class in Turkey. He holds a very high rank (equivalent to that of a Vizier), his father held similar rank, and his grandfather was Sheikh-ul-Islam. He is regarded by the Sultan as a man of dangerously liberal views, and is closely watched; but his reputation and influence have hitherto prevented his being molested by the Government. I may mention that this Mollah, and the man whose opinions are contained in my former Memorandum, are forbidden by Imperial Iradé from communicating with one another.

The Mollah regards the future of the country as entirely dependent upon the issue of the struggle between the Palace and the Porte. At present the Government is no longer carried on by any of the recognized departments of State. Every question, however trivial, is referred to the Sultan, and the Ministers are mere cyphers. The country is, moreover, under martial law, and any man who shows the slightest independence of spirit is promptly exiled, or only allowed on sufferance to remain in Constantinople under the strictest surveillance.

Absolute autocracy, such as has been established by Sultan Abdul Hamid, is contrary to the spirit of Islamism, whose very essence is government by the popular vote. The mouthpieces of the people are the Ulema, and even the Iradé of the Sultan is

powerless against the Fetvá of the Sheikh-ul-Islám. So true is this, even to-day, that the one department over which the Palace has no control is the Fetva Hane.

In the days of Sultan Mahmoud the struggle took the form of a conflict between the Sultan and the Ulema, and the latter were kept in check by the Janissaries until they, in their turn, became too powerful for the Sultan, and he exterminated them.

The power of the Palace was definitely circumscribed by the Hatt of Gulhane, promulgated by Sultan Abdul Mejid. It was communicated to the Powers, at the instance of Reshid Pasha, who saw the importance of making it an international instrument, and determined to use it as a weapon against the encroachments of the Palace. From that time up to the deaths of Ali Pasha and Fuad Pasha, the principle of government by a responsible Ministry was recognized by the Sultans, and even during the early years of the reign of Abdul Aziz the country enjoyed comparative prosperity. But with the death of Fuad, and the advent to power of Mahmoud Nedim, the mischief began, which gradually made the rule of Abdul Aziz utterly intolerable and brought on this dethronement.

The system of government by the Palace has gradually grown up during the present reign, since the time when Kutchuk Saïd Pasha was First Secretary of the Sultan.

Up to that time it had been the custom for the reports of Ministers to be sent up to the Palace for the information of the Sultan, and to obtain his sanction in the form of an Irade; but from the time of the Hatt of Gulhane the responsibility for the government of the country rested with the Ministers of State, and the Sultan's Decrees were issued as a mere formality on the part of the Ministers. Saïd, being a man of a good deal of originality and initiative, instituted the system of modifying the decisions of Ministers. Later, when he was himself Grand Vizier, he experienced the inconvenience of the system originally adopted by himself, but it was too late to make a change, and it has gradually developed in the hands of the present Sultan until the functions of the Porte have become purely nominal.

At present the Sultan has surrounded himself with a set of corrupt, unprincipled rascals.

The whole business of the State is transacted at the Palace, and every question is presented to the Sultan in the light which may happen to suit his entourage, and these men, in order to keep their hold on the Sultan, constantly play on his fears, and are careful to keep him in the dark as to the real condition of the country.

It is indispensable, if any improvement is to be hoped for, that the Sultan should be removed from the influences which now surround him. The Government must be intrusted to responsible Ministers, and the power of the Palace gang broken. But no such result can be brought about by the unaided efforts of the Turks themselves.

The system of martial law and repression have been carried to such an extent that, for the present, the Mussulmans are not in a position to move.

An opportunity now presents itself for assistance to be given from without to the more enlightened section of the Turkish population to assert themselves. If this opportunity is allowed to pass by, and the general discontent is allowed to spread, a peaceable solution of the question will become impossible. The Ulema are still a power in the country, though they are unable for the moment to make themselves heard. They are well aware of the danger of a continuance of the present state of anarchy, they feel that foreign assistance is necessary if prosperity is to be restored to the country, and the only Power which could, in their opinion, give disinterested assistance is England.

The Mollah stated that this is the feeling in all the Medressés, and he deplored the failure of England to send her fleet to Constantinople in 1895, when the coercion of the Sultan was first suggested. That would have settled the whole question.

He said that England appeared to have been duped by Russia on that occasion, otherwise he could not account for her vacillating policy which had produced the worst effects upon the mind of the Sultan.

The only way to ameliorate the condition of the country is to do away with the Palace gang and to entrust the government of the country to responsible Ministers. The Mollah is not much in favour of the revival of Midhat Pasha's constitution. He considers that the people are not yet fit for a Parliament, but of course even that, with any abuses it might bring with it at the outset, would be better than the continuance of the present tyranny.

Should the Sultan decline to accept the proposals of the Powers, a display of force should be made to bring him to reason, and the Ulema would then be able to make their voice heard.

If the general discontent should be allowed to spread still further, and no outside aid should be forthcoming to bring about a change of system, the dethronement of the Sultan must result in time. This is, however, not likely to be accomplished without much suffering and bloodshed, and the Mollah is of opinion that, before events are ripe for a revolution, Russia will, in all probability, have found some pretext for intervention on her own account.

The Ulema are well aware of what is the meaning of Russian intervention in Turkey, and dread it accordingly, but they would welcome the intervention of England, whom they consider interested in the maintenance of the Ottoman Empire, and also, in view of the Indian subjects of the Queen, as interested in the fate of Islam.

There are men in Turkey quite capable of reforming the Administration. Amongst others, Kiamil Pasha, Said Pasha, Moukhtar Pasha, and Sadik Pasha, but the ablest Ministers will accomplish nothing so long as the Palace controls their actions, and, short of civil war, which would speedily bring down a Russian occupation, the power of the Palace can only be broken with the assistance of the Powers.

Constantinople,
January 19, 1897.

No. 96.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received August* 30.)

(No. 573.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, August* 26, 1897.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith, in original, a document which I received by post from the Armenian Revolutionary Committee on the 20th August. Similar documents were received by the other Embassies here.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 96.

Manifesto of Revolutionary Armenians.

PENDANT le cours de longues et pénibles années le sang de l'Arménien a été versé, la femme Arménienne enlevée, tout ce qu'il y avait de sacré profané et l'Arménien réduit à l'impuissance d'en appeler s'est résigné à garder le silence.

Le bruit des atrocités commises est enfin parvenu aux oreilles des hommes d'État de l'Europe; ils en ont fait le sujet de leurs débats, mais cet état intolérable au lieu de s'améliorer n'a fait qu'empirer. Une oppression systématique commandée par en haut n'a pas manqué de succéder: meurtre, rapt, torture, violence, et enfin tout ce qui par le passé avait eu lieu dans l'obscurité se commit au grand jour sous les yeux même des Consuls de cette Europe, qui dans le Traité de Berlin garantissait la vie, la sécurité, et la parfaite tranquillité en Arménie. . . .

Saignés à blanc, épuisés, nous n'avions pas cependant perdu tout espoir, nous nous flattions que si le gémissement du peuple Arménien martyrisé parvenait aux oreilles des peuples de l'Europe, une main secourable nous serait tendue. L'eau qui tombe goutte à goutte perce le rocher; est-ce que les flots du sang Arménien répandus à torrent ne pourront pas émouvoir l'Europe? Mais c'était une déception amère, et peut-être c'est l'attention purement platonique de l'Europe qui a excité au carnage nos cruels oppresseurs. La patrie de l'Arménien a été transformée en une immense boucherie; monts et vallées ont été teints du sang des martyrs et le cri navrant des veuves et des orphelins monta jusqu'aux cieux. . . .

Mais tout cela même ne suffit pas à réveiller la conscience endormie de l'Europe et lui rappeler la miséricorde Chrétienne.

C'est alors que le peuple Arménien s'est rendu compte de l'abîme entr'ouvert sous ses pas qui engloutissait ses meilleurs enfants et qui menaçait de se refermer sur lui

en un immense tombeau. Il eut un frisson de réveil et son réveil fut la manifestation du 14 (26) Août, 1896. Dès lors nous étions dans la juste attente de voir le terme de nos misères, nous espérions que tant de sang versé aurait suffi et qu'enfin serait mise en vigueur ce projet de réforme martyrisé et de triste mémoire dont on avait fait bercé les Arméniens.

Une année d'angoisse et d'anxiété, une longue année de persécution et de martyre, une année de nouvelles déceptions vient de s'écouler. Sont restés lettres mortes les promesses qui nous ont été prodiguées et l'on a même tenté de condamner à l'oubli la cause Arménienne.

Quant à nous, il nous est impossible d'oublier le sang qu'ont répandus nos frères, il nous est impossible de supporter plus longtemps cet enfer. Réduits à l'extrémité nous rentrons derechef au scène, résolus à exécuter ce que nous vous avons fait entrevoir à la suite des événements du 14 (26) Août, 1896.

Ce sont les préliminaires du projet qui est autrement terrible que celui du grand assassin, projet dont l'idée même nous remplit de terreur.

Qu'il suffise donc, Ô peuples de l'Europe civilisée, humaine, Chrétienne! Pourquoi laisser anéantir un peuple qui par son antiquité, par son développement moral et intellectuel est incomparablement supérieur aux éléments qui l'entourent et le dominent? Ayez pitié de ceux qui meurent assommés et à la pointe de l'épée, ayez pitié de ceux qui pâlissent au fond des cachots ou languissent dans des exils lointains, ayez pitié des orphelins qui à l'égal des vôtres ont besoin de père et de mère, ayez pitié des vierges qui, l'égal de vos filles, ont droit de conserver leur honneur; ayez pitié d'un peuple qui gémit entre les fers et au milieu de l'esclavage, pour qui la liberté est une condition nécessaire de vivre, et qui ne souffre que pour le doux nom de Christ.

Il est superflu d'énumérer ici nos justes réclamations, du moment qu'elles vous ont été exposées plus d'une fois.

L'honneur de l'Arménien ne doit pas être foulé aux pieds, tout ce qu'il a de sacré ne doit pas être profané, il ne doit pas être frustré du fruit juste de ses labeurs pénibles. Tout ce que nous voulons ce sont des garanties pour la vie, l'honneur, et la fortune, tout ce que nous voulons c'est que la loi règne au lieu de la tyrannie et de l'arbitraire absolue.

Nous ne demandons que ce qui est nécessaire pour vivre en homme. Nous ne cesserons jamais d'agir tant qu'il ne sera pas donné pleine satisfaction aux réclamations légitimes sanctifiées par le sang de nos martyrs.

(Cachet.)
Comité Central de Constantinople.

No. 97.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received August 30.)

(No. 574.)
Constantinople, August 26, 1897.

My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith a copy of a Circular letter addressed by the Hintchagist Committee of Constantinople to the Ambassadors disclaiming all connection with the attempts of the 18th instant. This letter was distributed in Pera by two young Armenian girls last Sunday, but the copy destined for me was never delivered as the girls were arrested by the police close to the Italian Embassy.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 97.

Circular Letter addressed by the Hintchagist Committee of Constantinople to the Ambassadors.

Constantinople, le 22 Août, 1897.

Excellence,

LES Comités Arméniens n'ont certes pas abdiqué et se réservent en temps voulu de rappeler comme il convient aux Ambassadeurs leur indifférence absolue dans la

question Arménienne, mais ils ne peuvent cependant, aujourd'hui, laisser passer sans protester des attentats policiers et enfantins auxquels ils sont complétement étrangers.

Les attentats de Mercredi dernier sont le fait de jeunes Turcs, et la police qui soupçonne que la lumière commence à se faire dans l'esprit des Ambassadeurs est venue à la rescousse pour raffermir leur première impression ébranlée par l'envoi d'une Circulaire grotesque où les Arméniens se reconnaîtraient les auteurs de ces attentats. Le Comité Central de Constantinople, qui signe la dite Circulaire, n'a jamais existé. Cette manœuvre de la police n'a pour but que de chercher à justifier les ordres du Sultan déjà donnés de procéder à la pendaison de quelques Arméniens présentés comme les auteurs des attentats.

Nous ne pouvons, non plus, rester indifférents devant ces nombreuses arrestations qui se font, depuis l'attentat Turc, parmi l'innocent peuple Arménien; des persécutions qui peuvent provoquer de graves accidents dont nous vous laissons, dès aujourd'hui, toute la responsabilité.

Le Comité Hentchakiste de Constantinople,
(Signé) KARR.

No. 98.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received August 30.)

(No. 551.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, August 30, 1897, 10:30 A.M.*

HER Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van telegraphed to me on the 28th August as follows:—

"Shemsi Pasha is now only Acting Vali, having been again deprived of command of troops, and being replaced by Munir Pasha as Commander. My colleagues agree with me in thinking that the separation of these powers is very dangerous, and is likely to have the most serious consequences.

"We understand that Husni Pasha, who is coming here from Sivas, is a creature of the Mushir, and was concerned in the massacre at Tokat.

"The province is still in a state of disorder, and the revolutionists in Van have refused offers to surrender.

"Munir Pasha is incapable and without energy, and will be merely a tool in the hands of Zekki Pasha. My French colleague agrees with me that the safety of this vilayet imperatively demands the prompt dismissal of the latter official, and begs that the substance of this telegram may be communicated to the French Ambassador."

No. 99.

Consul-General Wood to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received September 6.)

(No. 3.)
My Lord, *Tabreez, August 14, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to forward, for your Lordship's information, the copy of a despatch which I have this day addressed Her Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran on the subject of an expedition of Persian forces against Persian Kurdish tribes on the Perso-Turkish border.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CECIL G. WOOD.

Inclosure in No. 99.

Consul-General Wood to Mr. C. Hardinge.

(No. 1.)
Sir, *Tabreez, August 14, 1897.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 24 of the 4th instant regarding the expedition which had been set on foot under the command of Prince Zaffir Essultaneh to overawe the Shekaki Kurds, who had lately shown signs of an aggressive and restless

temper. I have the honour to give the details of what occurred, as described by people who were not far from the scene when the Persian troops came in touch with the Shekaks.

As customary on such occasions in the East, an attempt was made to arrive at an understanding before coming to hands, but the Shekaki leaders declined to accept the main condition of peace submitted to them, *i.e.*, the payment of 1,000 tomans in the name of taxes and fines, and eventually there was nothing left but to fight.

The Persian force, numbering some 200 horse and 300 infantry, advanced against the Kurds, who were on a hill, but some twenty-five of the Kurdish marksmen who faced the onset posted among the rocks and boulders, their main body standing aside looking on unconcernedly.

These champions of the Shekaki tribe eventually succeeded in repulsing the soldiery, inflicting a loss of thirty men upon them and capturing a gun.

It is stated that the Persian horsemen, either owing to the nature of the ground, or to their being Sunnis, and therefore co-religionists of the Kurds, did not lend the assistance which was expected of them.

The Persians and their Commander, accompanied by the Majid Essultaneh, Governor of Urumia, who, in his civil capacity, had the onus of making the overtures of peace, as described, have retired to Kukhna Sheher (the Old City), on the border.

They number about 1,000 men, according to report, but are so badly equipped, armed, and so ill-conditioned generally, that they cannot cope successfully with the difficulties beseiling them, especially as, owing to their advance against the Shekaks, and the recent raid of the Armenian revolutionary parties, the Turkish border is ablaze, and the Kurds, already joined by the Shekaks, will make common cause against Persians and Christians in the Plain of Salmas, where loot is plentiful, and where the already terror-stricken inhabitants are in no position to offer the slightest resistance.

According to trustworthy information, three Armenian villages have already been raided.

I have reasons to know that the Zafir Essultaneh, who has been receiving order after order from the Amir Nizam, our Governor-General, some of which couched in most unparliamentary language, but such as often passes over the wires between superior and subordinate in Persia, has informed his Highness that he cannot accomplish more than he has done with the means at his disposal.

He has, therefore, been instructed to call out the Khoi army, about 2,000 men, but he may not be able to gather a quarter of these numbers at this season when the majority are occupied in attending to the harvest.

It is to be feared that the inhabitants of Salmas Plain will be the sufferers in these complications, as it seems likely that the Kurds may rest satisfied with the loot of the plain.

I am in a position to state that my Russian colleague has suggested to Mirza Djavad Khan, our Karguzar, who visited him yesterday morning to communicate to him the measures ordered and the telegrams sent by the Governor-General to the Zafir Essultaneh, that this last personage should be recalled. I cannot perceive the good which would accrue by recalling the present Commander of the forces in the disturbed districts, for they have no one to replace him advantageously, and the greatest General living could not do much with the wretched forces in those parts. The Russians, I know, have a grudge against the Zafir for some action of his when Governor of Urumia, and it may serve their purposes to allow of further disorganization in these parts.

In reproaching the Karguzar with the state of affairs in Urumia and Salmas, M. Petroff used the following words:—

"Il y a deux mois vous étiez prévenus contre moi quand j'ai voulu apporter les Cossaques, mais je avois que dans votre impuissance de rien faire dans ce cas vous me prierez bientôt de venir à votre secours."

The Turkish Consul for Khoi is with the Persians at Kukhna Sheher.

I have, &c.

(Signed) CECIL G. WOOD.

No. 100.

Consul-General Wood to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received September 6.*)

(No. 43)

My Lord, *Tabreez, August 15, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to forward, for your Lordship's information, the copy of a despatch I have this day addressed Her Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran on the subject of the violation of Turkish territory by an armed party of Armenian revolutionary Societies.

I have, &c.

(Signed) CECIL G. WOOD.

Inclosure in No. 100.

Consul-General Wood to Mr. C. Hardinge.

(No. 5.)

Sir, *Tabreez, August 15, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to report, for your information, the news which has reached Tabriz with regard to the doings of the Armenian revolutionary parties, which since the beginning of the troubles in Asia Minor, have made the districts of Salmas and Urumia the starting points of their raids and combinations against Turkish territory, no steps having been taken by the Persian Government either to disperse or prevent them provoking the Turkish Kurds into reprisals on the border.

For some months the adherents of the two Armenian Societies, the "Tashnaesagan" and "Hunshakian," have been gathering together, group by group, until they considered themselves sufficiently strong for a successful dash into Turkish territory.

At this point, however, dissensions broke out among the members of "Tashnaesagan," the most numerously represented of the two Societies, as to the advisability of the projected attack on Turkish ground.

The minority held out against precipitating matters whilst the attention of the Great Powers was engaged in the Mediterranean, and maintained its view so obstinately that it almost obtained the abandonment of all idea of violating Turkish territory for this year at least.

As, however, funds were no longer forwarded to them from head-quarters, on the plea that they had not accomplished anything to justify further expenditure, the supporters of an immediate advance eventually carried the day.

They therefore proceeded, to the number of 300, to the Armenian village of Haftevan on the border, brought together eight days' provisions per head, procured medicaments, bandages, &c., horses for transport purposes, and on the 4th instant, accompanied by a priest, and under the leadership of Dr. Ohanian, they marched over the border, making for the encampment of Sheikh Kader,* one of the leaders in the pursuit and slaughter of the band of 100 Armenians who had left Van for Persia in 1896.†

On nearing the valley in which the camp was situated, they stopped to tether their horses, and to partake of Holy Communion, and then proceeded to surround the Kurdish tents, which, owing to the season of the year, were open at the sides, and into which, at a concerted signal as the day broke on the 5th instant, they poured three volleys of rifle fire. Throwing down their guns, they then rushed in among the helpless Kurds with drawn swords, and put all they could reach—men, women,‡ and children—to death, among whom the Sheikh and his wife, who were dispatched by Dr. Ohanian.

It is calculated that at least 400 Kurds, of both sexes, lost their lives in this surprise.

* Set up in the vicinity of the Armenian village of Aelpak, which had been totally destroyed in 1896.—C. G. W.

† See Consul-General Wood's despatch No. 30 of July 16, 1896.

‡ They are said to have been urgently begged by members of the German Missionary Society in Urumia to spare women and children in their attack, but it seems they forgot the dictates of humanity in their lust for revenge.—C. G. W.

Having taken possession of the camp, they proceeded to search for the treasure,* in jewels and cash, which they knew had been taken from their unfortunate brethren at the time of the above-mentioned retreat from Van, and they at last found a case filled with the loot,† and a jewelled sword which had been presented by the Sultan of Turkey to Sheikh Kader in recognition of the bravery he had shown on that occasion.

This weapon was immediately presented by them to their leader Dr. Ohandan in the midst of victorious acclamations.

Feeling that their present position would soon become untenable, owing to the escape of some of the Kurds, they retired carrying away their dead, four in number, some of the finest Kurdish horses and the treasure, to a hill upon the road to Persia, which they had already fixed upon. They had hardly reached it, however, when they perceived a party of about 150 Kurds coming through the valleys towards them, who, however, recognizing the strength of the position, did not attack separately, but joined a body of their countrymen who suddenly showed themselves coming from another direction.

Here again the superior armament and the determination of the Armenians prevailed, for, after maintaining the fight until the close of day, the Kurds retired leaving seventy dead behind them, whilst the revolutionists, with a loss of only sixteen men, and sixteen wounded, of whom four severely, left the hill unmolested, and made Persian territory in seven hours' marching.

On entering Persia they scattered in small groups among the Armenian villages, as they had reason to fear arrest by the Persian authorities.

They state, should they not succeed in bribing the Persian officials, that they will come together again, and march to the Arax, cutting their way through any opposition which may be offered to them.

It is a fact worthy of note that the men composing the band, whose desperate exploit I have just reported, are young fellows of good education, and generally of most respectable parentage.

A few belong to Tabreez, some come from Turkey, and many are from Russia.

Among these last are youths who have obtained temporary leave from the Russian army, and others deserters from the same, but all are armed with the latest pattern rifle,‡ as I have already pointed out in past correspondence, and seem to find no difficulty in obtaining either arms or ammunition from the other side of the Arax.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CECIL G. WOOD.

No. 101.

Consul-General Wood to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received September* 6.)

(No. 5.)
My Lord, *Tabreez, August* 16, 1897.

I HAVE the honour to transmit, for your Lordship's information, the copy of a further despatch I have this day addressed Her Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran on the subject of the expedition of Persian forces against the Shekaki or Persian Kurds.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CECIL G. WOOD.

Inclosure in No. 101.

Consul-General Wood to Mr. C. Hardinge.

(No. 6.)
Sir, *Tabreez, August* 16, 1897.

IN continuance of my despatch No. 4 of the 14th instant with reference to the expedition against the Shekaki tribes and the complications which have arisen on the Turco-Persian border in consequence of this expedition, as well as of the raid of the Armenian revolutionary parties on Turkish territory, as reported in my despatch

* See Consul-General Wood's despatch No. 32 of July 29, 1896.—C. G. W.
† The value of the articles recovered is said to amount to 7,000*l.*—C. G. W.
‡ See latter part of Consul-General Wood's despatch No. 29 of July 15, 1896.—C. G. W.

No. 5, I have the honour to state that, from copies of telegrams addressed by the Zaffir Essultaneh, and dated the 12th instant, which have been communicated to me by the Tabriz authorities, it appears that the village of Var, distant about 2 miles from Khoi, had been attacked by 700 Kurds and the inhabitants destroyed.

That the Zaffir Essultaneh, in consequence of this attack, had stopped the Maki regiment, which was on its way to Salmas, and sent it to guard Khoi.

That the Kurds in great numbers had come down upon Karatépé, but had been repulsed by the Persian forces, and that he, the Zaffir, had personally supervised the return of the property belonging to the inhabitants of Karatépé as well as that belonging to the people of Mafajiul and Shor-bulak.

That he has requested reinforcements from the horsemen of Hosenakli of the Karadagh.

The above-mentioned villages must be those which I had reported as having been subjected to reprisals on the part of the Turkish Kurds.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CECIL G. WOOD.

No. 102.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received September* 7.)

(No. 575.)
My Lord. *Constantinople, August* 27, 1897.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 1,101 of the 30th December last, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Sivas, transmitting a letter from Lieutenant Kiamil, who was present at the Pinjan disorders in September 1896.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 102.

Major Bulman to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 16.)
Sir, *Sivas, August* 17, 1897.

I HAVE the honour to transmit original letter of Lieutenant Kiamil, with translation and copy, giving some details of his own action in reference to the disorders at Pinjan last September. I have already referred to the conduct of Lieutenant Kiamil in despatch No. 37, giving tabular statistics of the disorders in Sivas Vilayet under heading "Pinjan."

I have, &c.
(Signed) P. BULMAN.

Inclosure 2 in No. 102.

Letter of Lieutenant Kiamil.

(Translation.)

AFTER salutations to various friends, and stating he is engaged to be married, Lieutenant Kiamil states:—

"About fifteen days ago I went, with forty regular soldiers, to three Armenian villages, where I was in charge. Six thousand Kurds made an attack, and for a long time there was firing, but eight of the Kurds and 100 Armenians were killed. I myself killed nine of the biggest swine among the Armenians of Pinjan with a Martini. These blasphemed our Lord and Prophet, for, except Zeitoun, there is no village like this Pinjan. There are 180 houses. I had charge of the three villages: Pinjan, Kesné, and Zimara. If you ask, let us see what will happen, the answer is, nothing at present. A telegram came from the Palace about Pinjan. Who has been the cause of this? May God make it auspicious. Tell this to no one, neither to my brother nor to the children, for I did not interfere with the Kurds. The village, too, was burnt."

The letter then concludes with mention of some presents he had sent.

No. 103.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received September 7.)

(No. 577.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, August 30, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul-General at Beyrout respecting a telegram sent by M. Hanotaux to the French Consul-General on the subject of Naoum Pasha's reappointment as Governor-General of the Lebanon.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 103.

Consul-General Drummond Hay to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 17. Confidential.)
Sir, *Beyrout, August 20, 1897.*

WITH reference to the reappointment of Naoum Pasha as Governor-General of the Lebanon, I have been confidentially informed that the French Acting Consul-General received a telegram on the 15th instant from M. Hanotaux with instructions "to present personally his compliments and congratulations to Naoum Pasha, whose appointment is for the welfare of the Lebanon, according to the reports of French Representatives, and especially of M. Souhart." The last words of the telegram caused some surprise in Lebanon official circles, as it is a well-known fact that the principal agitators against Naoum Pasha's nomination had latterly placed reliance on M. Souhart's support, and, after his departure for Constantinople in June last, reports emanating from French sources were circulated that he would succeed in convincing the French Ambassador of the unfitness of Naoum Pasha for the Lebanon.

I should mention that M. Hanotaux is personally acquainted with Naoum Pasha since the days when he was Secretary of Embassy at Constantinople.

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. DRUMMOND HAY.

No. 104.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received September 7.)

(No. 578.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, August 30, 1897.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 539 of the 9th August, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Bitlis respecting the state of affairs in that place and Moleki.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 104.

Vice-Consul Crow to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 21.)
Sir, *Bitlis, August 9, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to confirm my telegram of the 8th August, informing your Excellency of the arrival at Bitlis of two batteries of mountain artillery for the purpose of hastening a solution of the Moleki difficulties by awing the tribes into a surrender of the parties guilty of the murder of the Kaimakam and gendarmes last May.

The guns are accompanied by about forty gunners, under the command of a Major of Artillery.

Haji Nejmeddin and Gahsin Effendi, on whose shoulders rests the odium of having encouraged the disaffected hillmen to defy the injunctions of the Local Government, were released from prison, as I had the honour to report to your Excellency in my despatch No. 19 of the 4th July, Haji Sheikh Emin, a prominent Kurd of Bitlis, giving satisfactory guarantees for their good behaviour. The two sons of Haji Nejmeddin are detained in prison pending a settlement of the Modeki question. A portion of the arms taken by the Kurds from the murdered men has been restored, and the Elders of the tribe have agreed to surrender the parties implicated in the outrage to justice, on condition of free pardon being granted to the rest of the inhabitants of the mountain. The Vali has assured them of his good offices in the matter, but insists on the unconditional surrender of some twenty of the leading tribesmen who took a prominent share in the disturbances.

The sympathies of the resident Moslem population of Bitlis, which is almost exclusively Kurdish, are, with a few exceptions, on the side of the mountaineers of Modeki, to whom they are in many instances related and with whom they hold frequent intercourse. The position of the Vali, therefore, has been, and still is, one of great peril. Several attempts have been made on his life, and the animosity with which he is regarded at the head-quarters of the 10th Army Corps serves to accentuate the ill-feeling to which he is exposed on the part of the Kurdish inhabitants of this district.

According to his Excellency's own account, which seems a very plausible one, the Mushir is doing his best to embarrass the position at Bitlis by tacitly encouraging the Hamidieh in their depredations in Boulanik and Akhlat, and by refuting as wanting in veracity all allegations formulated by the Vali against the Kurdish Chiefs who are responsible for these disorders. By this means the Mushir hopes to discredit the Vali at the capital by convincing the Palace that the latter is unable to preserve order in his district, and, hence, incapable of holding any administrative appointment.

Emner Bey, who is neither wanting in courage or astuteness, accepts the challenge, and I think, as far as I have had an opportunity of judging, that he makes the most of the very scanty means at his disposal, and bids fair, in spite of the absence of support, to maintain his own authority. He is hard-working, and exerts his influence for the repression of disorder, and in many cases achieves success under very adverse conditions. His chief fear is lest the situation should be still further complicated by the visits of Armenian revolutionary emissaries from Salmas and other places on the Turco-Persian frontier. The presence and the acts of men of this category would form a dangerous weapon in the hands of the fanatical portion of the Kurdish population, and his Excellency does not conceal his alarm lest a sudden outbreak of popular feeling should occur, which would vent itself with disastrous consequences on the Armenian inhabitants of this and the surrounding districts.

I have, &c.
(Signed) F. E. CROW.

No. 105.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received September 7.)

(No. 579.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, August 30, 1897.*

WITH reference to my telegram No. 513 of the 8th August, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van respecting the incursion of the revolutionary bands into the Van Vilayet.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 105.

Captain Elliot to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 10.)
Sir, *Van, August 11, 1897.*

WITH reference to my telegrams of the 8th and 9th August, I have the honour to report as follows:—

On Saturday last the 8th August, a telegram from Bashkala stated that Sherif Bey

had been attacked at daybreak on Friday by a party of Armenian revolutionists, estimated at 1,500, and that forty or fifty people had been killed.

Sherif Bey is a Kurd who has incurred the enmity of the Armenians by his conduct towards their countrymen.

I telegraphed to your Excellency accordingly, but was not clear whether this report was not merely a ruse on the part of evil-disposed Turks to create ill-feeling against Armenians and provoke a massacre.

I called on the Acting Vali, Shemshi Pasha, on Sunday, and found him much disturbed by the news. He told me that if the revolutionists got into the town and were aided by the inhabitants, a disturbance (*i.e.*, massacre) would ensue.

I told him I had perfect confidence in him and knew he would take effective steps to prevent anything of the sort.

On Monday morning I called again and found him more confident. He read to me the official reports he had received, and I took notes, the substance of which I telegraphed to your Excellency. It is as follows:—

Two bands of Armenian revolutionists are across the frontier. Each is said to be not less than 2,000 strong. A third is hourly expected to cross at Serai.

The Hamidieh Kurds near Perigri are said to have been engaged with one of these parties for two days. No news of the result of the fighting has yet been received.

The band that crossed near Bashkala are said to have approached the frontier with a Persian force estimated at six battalions, one battery, and 1,000 cavalry. I doubt the accuracy of these figures. The Armenians are said to have numbered 1,800 men on foot and 200 mounted, with three buglers, and a certain number of Russian officers, probably Armenians. Some were uniforms of various sorts.

At night the Armenians marched to a monastery about six hours distant from Bashkala, and before dawn had surrounded Sherif Bey's camp. When day broke the bugles sounded and the attack began. The Kurds were completely surprised. I am not clear as to what exactly happened. The Armenians apparently carried the camp and are charged with committing brutal atrocities on women and children. Reinforcements came up from the Turkish side and fighting continued till Saturday, when the revolutionists retired across the frontier into the Dashmen Dere, a narrow valley up which runs a road from Selmas, via Khanig to Kottur.

Sherif Bey is wounded and his wife killed. The Turkish losses are:—

Killed.—Nizam: 1 major, 1 sergeant, 1 private; Hamidieh: 5 privates; tribal Kurds: 47 men, 68 women, 48 children.

Wounded.—Nizam: 1 First Lieutenant, 1 sergeant; Hamidieh: 13; tribal Kurds: 10 men, 27 women, 10 children.

Missing.—Hamidieh: 3.

Total killed, 171: wounded, 78; missing, 3.

I fear there was at first a great lack of surgical aid on the spot. It is now being sent.

The Armenians left sixty-three dead, ten of which were killed in some night-fighting that took place probably on Friday. Two of the corpses were those of Mahommedans in Persian uniform, and it was reported that there was also a Russian officer among the slain.

Satisfactory proof of the presence of Russian officers with the revolutionists appears to be lacking.

The account of the behaviour of the Persians is most extraordinary. I believe they bear the Turks no good-will and like to see them embarrassed. The occurrences that have come under my observation on this frontier since the spring would have before now provoked vigorous remonstrance from a country more alive to its dignity and interests. The feeling against Persia here is now very bitter. When the Persian Consul-General went to call on the Vali a few days ago he was treated with very scant courtesy.

Yesterday, Tuesday, I found the city quiet, nearly all the shops open, and everything going on as usual; this is due to the confidence felt in Shemshi Pasha personally. I beg your Excellency to give him every support, as I know the difficulties of his position.

He called up the Mahommedans and warned them that it was the soldiers' business to deal with the revolutionists if they came. He said if there was a disturbance he would use artillery.

The Armenians he warned to avoid in any way helping or concealing revolutionists under pain of most serious consequences.

All classes of the Reserve have been called out and large reinforcements are on their way here.

For the present I think it desirable to remain in Van, as feeling here is very intense.

I have little doubt but that the revolutionists have many sympathizers in the city. Should any of the revolutionists from outside get in among the gardens, which occupy an area about 5 miles by 3, and are almost impossible to guard, further trouble may be looked for.

In conclusion, I beg most respectfully to draw your Excellency's attention to the conduct of the Persian Government and their apparent complicity in events that are now transpiring.

I have, &c.
(Signed) G. T. ELLIOT.

No. 106.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received September 7.)

(No. 581.)
My Lord, *Therapia, August 30, 1897.*

ON receipt of Mr. Hardinge's telegram No. 51 of the 25th August, reporting that Sheikh Sadik was awaiting an opportunity to make a raid on Selmas and Urmiah, I instructed Mr. Block to urge on the Foreign Minister the necessity for taking prompt measures to restrain the Sheikh, and to add that Her Majesty's Government had given similar advice to the Persian Government to restrain the Kurds on their side of the frontier.

I have informed Mr. Hardinge of the above by telegraph.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

No. 107.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received September 7.)

(No. 585.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, September 2, 1897.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 491 of the 26th July, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van respecting the work done by Russian priests among the Nestorians.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 107.

Captain Elliot to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 11.)
Sir, *Van, August 18, 1897.*

IN continuation of my despatch No. 38 on the subject of the Nestorians going over to the Orthodox faith, I have the honour to report as follows:—

According to news from Urumiah (Persia) the two Russian priests already there are meeting with such success that it is reported that nine more will join them to help in the work. The Archbishop of Canterbury's Mission contemplated abandoning the field. The American Mission still means to hold on, but has lost a very considerable number of its adherents.

In Turkey, Mr. Browne reports that Mar Shimun still protests that he does not want to have any dealings with the Russian Church. The attitude of the Metropolitan (Archbishop) of the Nestorians is considered doubtful. This is the man I helped to get across the frontier to join his family in Terzavar (Persia) last July. His diocese is in Shemdinan (Turkey), but he dare not live there for fear of Sheikh Sadik.

If an invitation is forthcoming, the Russian priests will start operations in Turkey. It is not improbable that this will be the case before long. At present people are chiefly exercised to know how far the promises held out by the Russian priests are authorized by their Government.

If it appears that they have a substantial backing the chances are that all the Nestorians will go over to them. Should this, however, not be the case, the Missions which can offer other material advantages will not remain without adherents.

I have, &c.
(Signed) G. T. ELLIOT.

No. 108.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received September 7.)

(No. 586.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, September 2, 1897.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 542 of the 11th ultimo, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul-General at Bagdad respecting the dismissal of the Mudir of Barwarah.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 108.

Lieutenant-Colonel Loch to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 85.)
Sir, *Bagdad, August 6, 1897.*

IN continuation of my despatch No. 76 dated the 16th ultimo (oppression of Nestorian Christians at Barwarah), I have the honour very respectfully to place below, for your Excellency's information, extract from a letter, No. 34, dated the 27th idem, from the British Consular Agent at Mosul:—

"No action has hitherto been taken by the vilayet for the dismissal of Reshid Bey, the Mudir of Barwarah. It appears his Excellency the Vali has suppressed the order, and persists upon his non-dismissal for a special cause."

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. LOCH.

No. 109.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received September 7.)

(No. 587.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, September 2, 1897.*

WITH reference to Mr. Devey's Memorandum on the disturbed state of the Hedjaz, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Jeddah respecting the disturbed state of the Jeddah-Mecca road.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 109.

Consul Devey to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 83.)
Sir, *Jeddah, August 9, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to report that since addressing your Excellency on the subject of the disturbed state of the district (Memorandum forwarded in No. 73 of the 8th ultimo) there is practically no improvement, instances of Bedouin violence and robbery are occurring about once a-week at the least, it is true that these are generally only petty raids, but the want of security is badly felt. On the night of the 4th instant, near this town, some fifty or sixty camels, carrying valuable merchandize from here to Mecca, were carried off, but happily without loss of life; on this occasion British Indian merchants were sufferers to a large extent.

This incident being a rather larger raid than usual goes far to show that the root of the Bedouins' discontent may be found in other causes than the prohibition of communication between Mecca and Jeddah, which was levied on the 28th ultimo.

The troops in garrison have not been reinforced, but it is expected that an Austrian ship of war will call at this port in about a month's time.

I have, &c.
(Signed) G. P. DEVEY.

No. 110.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received September 7.)

(No. 588.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, September 2, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Damascus, respecting the state of affairs in the Hauran.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 110.

Consul Richards to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 45.)
Sir, *Damascus, August 21, 1897.*

WITH reference to your Excellency's despatch of the 6th instant instructing me to convey to the Vali your Excellency's compliments and congratulations on the able and impartial manner in which he has performed his duties during his short tenure of office at Beyrout, I have the honour to report that I have spoken to Nazim Pasha in the sense above indicated. His Excellency appeared to be highly gratified by the message, and begged me to convey to your Excellency his warmest thanks.

As regards the Hauran, the pacification of which is the most serious problem he has to study in this province, the Vali informed me that his plan was to steer a middle course between the excessive severity which would be entailed by the adoption of a policy of coercion and the indifference and studied neglect which unfortunately prevailed under the old régime before matters came to a crisis in that district. On my asking Nazim Pasha whether it was intended to persevere in the policy of exacting military service from all the inhabitants of the Hauran alike, whether Druse, Moslem, or Bedawi, he replied that no final decision had been arrived at, and that possibly a respite might be accorded to the persons affected, for this year at all events.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. S. RICHARDS.

No. 111.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received September 7.)

(No. 590.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, September 2, 1897.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 566 of the 28th July last, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Bitlis, respecting the tax collecting abuses in the Mush and Guendj district.

I intend to make representations to the Porte on the subject of the most serious cases mentioned by Mr. Crow.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 111.

Vice-Consul Crow to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 22.)

Bitlis, August 14, 1897.

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your Excellency's despatch of the 28th July, inclosing a Memorandum by Mr. Block to the effect that the Porte denies the existence of any irregularities or undue severity in the collection of taxes in Mush and Guendj, as complained of in Vartan Vartabed's letter, and bases this denial on information received from the Mutessarifs of the districts in question.

In my despatch No. 20 of the 14th ultimo, I had the honour to report to your Excellency on the lamentable state of the Mush plains, and adverted incidentally to the condition of the villages in Guendj, through which I travelled last June. I did not wish to weary your Excellency with a tedious repetition of the crucial instances of misgovernment and oppression which came under my notice when visiting those regions; and purposely eliminated from my Report as much detail as possible, confining myself to general remarks on the condition of the inhabitants, based on the conclusions which I drew from my own examination of their villages.

It is hardly to be expected that the Mutessarifs of Mush and Guendj would so far commit themselves with the Porte as to disclose the abuses of their own Administration; but, as the latter appears to be under a misapprehension as regards the practices of the local authorities in these parts, I beg to supplement my remarks on the Mush Sandjak by quoting a few instances of the irregularities complained of in Armenian villages, which I have had full opportunities of testing and verifying by personal examination and inquiry.

As regards Guendj I have nothing further to add to the details already given in my despatch No. 20 of the 14th July.

Khasskeui.—In May last, Haji Ali, tax collector, put his agents in five parts of this village at the same time. He beat Maleom Mekmoulian because the latter had no money, and wounded him in the head in three places with a stick. He stole the shoes of thirty men and gave them to the gendarmes. He took the oxen and cows of those who could not pay their taxes, even from villagers who had only one team, and sold them to Kurds and Mush butchers for quarter of their value. He robbed the women of their clothes and beat the men, pulling out the hairs of their beards and moustaches.

Snadnilah of the zaptieh cordon beat Grieor who could not pay his taxes, and sold part of his team of oxen, leaving him insufficient to plough his fields. The same man lends money at 50 per cent. to villagers who have no ready cash for taxes. He has been eight years in the village and has amassed a small fortune by these means.

Parsegh, the Reiss, is still in Khasskeui, and his conduct in respect of the villagers has not improved since the complaints made against him in 1895.

Sagdun.—Relief was given to the village in July 1896, and on the same day the tax-collectors, hearing that money had been distributed, came from the Kaimakamlik of Khovep, and took 600 piastres from the village for taxes.

Pergevank.—Pergevank is a village of seventy houses. Orders were issued to take all the men for "amalian," or road labour, at one time. This was in the grass season, and men had to be left to cut it or the crop would be lost. The Mutessarif of Mush, in answer to their complaints, refused to let them go in batches, and ordered them all to turn out or pay substitutes.

The Headmen of fourteen plundered villages on the Mush plain exempted from military tax, complained to the Vali that, in spite of Government orders for the remission of this tax, the Mush authorities sent men to collect it. The Vali gave them a written order to protect them, which they showed to the Mutessarif. The latter flew into a rage and imprisoned four of them for having complained.

Mush.—At Mush the Mufti is building a house. He neither pays for the labour or the material. Trees are taken from the villages, and the Armenian peasants compelled to do the work.

Mogunk.—The tithes of Mogunk for 1312, a village of forty Armenian and twenty Turkish families, were bought by Khalil Effendi, a member of the Administrative Council of Mush. This is an illegal proceeding as members of the Council cannot farm tithes. The transaction was therefore effected in the name of the villagers themselves, who paid 5,000 piastres and 100 kilehs of wheat to Government on the guarantee of Khalil Effendi. The latter gave nothing in writing but made up his account with the villagers to 12,000 piastres, and now claims this sum as being money due for tithe advances loaned

to the peasants. As he is one of the most influential Turks of Mush complaints against him are unavailing, especially as he supports his claim by the production of forged receipts, which Christian evidence is not strong enough to refute.

Khirzi Bin-es-Seleh, a Turk of Mogunk and tithe farmer, advances money to the peasants on what is known as "salaf," recoverable at harvest time at 200 per cent. interest. The men of Mogunk were all summoned for "amalian" at one time, and to avoid leaving their fields unsown, were compelled to borrow money at the above rate from Bin-es-Seleh to pay themselves out.

Khavadorik.—In Khavadorik, a Protestant Armenian village, Khartian was so badly beaten by Hussein Agha, a zaptieh, that he fell ill and died in ten days from the effects. An inquiry was held and a verdict returned of "death from natural causes."

In the same village the collectors of the sheep tax for 1894 gave a false Return, doubling the number of sheep, so that 4,000 piastres were claimed from the villagers. The latter complained, and officials sent by the Government to inquire confirmed the justice of the complaint and reported the matter to Government. In spite of this, the present Mutessarif of Mush claimed the arrears of this tax, caused the peasants to be beaten for objecting, and then told them to pay this year's military exemption tax instead. A sum was collected for this purpose, but on its receipt in May last, the money was credited by the Mutessarif as a payment on account of the fraudulent sheep tax of 1894.

Pertagh.—In Pertagh 90 men were registered for "amalian." On the 10th June the whole number were ordered to turn out at one time. It being sowing time they begged the Mutessarif of Mush to let them go in batches (which is the rule), but the latter said they must all go at once or pay. Having no money they had to leave their fields and go on the road.

Areuj.—The Reiss of Areuj, a Catholic village, was beaten in the Government House at Mush for complaining of the rigour with which the zaptiehs collected taxes in that village.

Ziaret.—The Government levies the gross sum due by this village for taxes from the more prosperous inhabitants, irrespective of the exodus of many families, or the poverty of the remainder, and leaves them to recover what they can from their fellow villagers. The Vali tells me that this is a lawful proceeding as regards military exemption tax, but the facts point to the custom being universal, where much poverty renders the individual collection of taxes tedious or impossible.

Hebian.—There were four cases of starvation in Hebian last winter. The village suffers from the pressure of Mehmed Ali, a Kurdish Hassanuli Aghi from Boulanik, whose misdeeds necessitated a change of residence. He located himself in Hebian last September, bringing with him many horses, cattle, and sheep, which were billeted on the villagers and fed gratis during the winter. He compels the Christians to cut their own crops for his benefit, and makes them work on Sundays, and perpetrates a variety of other abuses. They have begged to have him removed, but the Government of Mush pays no attention to them.

Ardyouk.—There were three cases of starvation last winter at Ardyouk. Many of the fields are unsown. Some of the women are only half clothed and many children are naked. The Government collects its taxes as usual.

Soldum and Alizotum.—The men taken for "amalian" from these villages worked seven days (four being the rule), and were ordered to continue. The Belediyre Reiss tied up a man in a cart, against whom he had a grudge, and left him exposed in the sun for many hours. The man has now got sunstroke.

Hoguuk.—This is a Catholic village. Kerim, a zaptieh, beat five women who tried to prevent the sale of their only cow for taxes, and the Reiss and Kiatib of the village were subjected to the same treatment a month ago.

Narshen.—This is a Catholic village of 250 families. Ten are well-to-do, and have to pay the taxes of their poorer neighbours. The tithes of last year were farmed to Nadir Agha and Nurban Bey, of Mush, who bought the village for 13,000 piastres, and took more than their due. They had to feed thirteen men and four horses for three months.

Vartims.—The tithes of Vartims for 1895 were bought by the inhabitants for 300 kilehs of wheat, which were stored in the village. The place was sacked by the Kurds and the wheat taken. The Government, which could neither protect them nor recover the grain, now claims 30,000 piastres, the price of the wheat at that time, at 100 piastres per kileh of [?], which is about double its marketable value at the present date.

The Multezims of Vartims, Hassan and Ibrahim, Turks of Mush, realized nearly cent. per cent. profit on the tithe transaction of last year, besides burdening the village with their horses and men for many months.

Vartinis was formerly a prosperous village, and the inhabitants some of the bravest of the plain. These are the men who resisted Mousah Bey, and by their exertions brought to the notice of superior authorities the cruelty and abuses which finally led to the latter's exile. Some still languish in the prisons of Diarbekir for having retaliated on the Kurds of Avzut in 1890, who killed some of their number, and the rest, reduced in means and broken in spirit, pay a pittance to two Circassian Mussulmans from the neighbourhood to reside in their village and protect them from Kurdish inroads.

The list is not exhausted, and I have drawn attention only to those abuses of more general application. They are nothing new, and are characterized throughout by a wearisome similarity. But they serve at least to illustrate the present relations existing between the governors and the governed, and explain to some extent the difficulties of effacing the hereditary impress, which centuries of domination on the one hand and centuries of servitude on the other have left on Turk and Raya in the eastern provinces of the Empire.

The Memorandum contained in your Excellency's despatch of the 28th July is returned herewith.

I have, &c.
(Signed) FRANCIS EDWARD CROW.

No. 112.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received September 7.)

(No. 591. Confidential.)
Constantinople, September 2, 1897.

My Lord,

IN continuation of my despatch No. 574 of the 26th August, inclosing copy of a Circular letter addressed by the Hintchagist Committee of Constantinople to the Ambassadors, I have now the honour to communicate to your Lordship the following confidential details respecting the arrest of the young girls who were distributing the letter in question.

The letter was duly delivered at the Russian and French Embassies, but when the girls arrived at the Italian Embassy, the cavass not only declined to receive the letter but denounced them to the police, who immediately arrested them. One of the girls, being the daughter of a doorkeeper of the Russian Consulate-General, was immediately released at the request of the Russian Embassy, but the other girl, named Anna, 17 years of age, was incarcerated in the prison of Zalata Serai, and the letters she was carrying seized.

I have, together with the French and Italian Embassies, taken steps to ascertain that she is not ill-treated in prison, and Mr. Fitzmaurice, Third Dragoman of the Embassy, has had two interviews with her in the presence of the Mutessarif of Pera.

She made no complaint, but protested her innocence, declaring that she had received the letters from an unknown man who accosted her in the street, and handed her a card from her *fiancé*, an Armenian named Andon at present in London, on which was written a message requesting her to deliver the letters at their destination.

The Turkish authorities deny this statement, their version being that the girl is the sister of one of the revolutionists recently arrested.

The girl is still detained in prison, but we have urged that, on the ground of her youth and probable innocence of complicity in revolutionary schemes, she should be released and allowed to return home under "surveillance."

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

No. 113.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received September 7.)

(No. 595.)
Therapia, September 2, 1897.

My Lord,

WITH reference to my despatch No. 519 of the 3rd August, I have the honour to report that the Tokat Commission of Inquiry has returned to Constantinople.

I instructed Mr. Block to again ask the Foreign Minister what decision has been arrived at in regard to the execution of the sentences of the Commission. His

Excellency replied that all those sentenced to death would be imprisoned for life and the other guilty exiled.

In reply to further inquiries, Tewfik Pasha stated that there was little hope of the Commission being sent to Eghin, and I now hear from an indirect source that there is an idea of sending them to Van to inquire into the recent frontier disturbances in that vilayet.

I have, &c.
(In the absence of the Ambassador),
(Signed) W. G. MAX MÜLLER.

No. 114.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received September 7.)

(No. 562.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, September 7, 1897, 10·50 A.M.*

WITH reference to your Lordship's telegram No. 362 of the 4th instant, I have the honour to report that the Grand Vizier declares that there are no armed bands in the Province of Van, and that the authorities have taken all necessary measures to prevent the formation of any.

No. 115.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received September 8.)

(No. 565.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, September 8, 1897, noon.*

IT is stated at the Porte that the Persian Government have admitted their responsibility for the recent Armenian raid across the Turkish frontier and have arrested the perpetrators, thirteen being extradited to Turkey and the remainder imprisoned or sent to Russia.

The Porte have declined the Shah's offer to compensate Sherif Agha, pointing out that reparation to individuals must be made through the Turkish authorities.

No. 116.

Mr. C. Hardinge to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received September 9.)

(No. 57.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Tehran, September 9, 1897.*

I HAVE received a report from Her Majesty's Consul-General at Tabreez of an attack by Kurds upon some villages in the plain of Salmas. Several villages, however, combined together and repulsed the assailants with small loss, but the Kurds succeeded in burning the villages.

No. 117.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received September 12.)

(No. 569.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, September 12, 1897, 10·45 A.M.*

IT is stated by Porte that Turkish frontier has been crossed by two more bands at Bargiri and Serai.

Latter, consisting of nineteen, dispersed by Turks.

No. 118.

Consul-General Wood to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received September 13.)

(No. 6.)
My Lord, *Tabreez, August 25, 1897.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 5 of the 15th instant, I have the honour to forward, for your Lordship's information, the copy of a further despatch I addressed to Her Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran on the 23rd instant, reporting the dispersion of the Armenian revolutionary parties which carried out the armed raid and attack upon a tribe of Turkish Kurds on the Turco-Persian border.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CECIL G. WOOD.

Inclosure in No. 118.

Consul-General Wood to Mr. C. Hardinge.

(No. 7.)
Sir, *Tabreez, August 23, 1897.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 5, reporting the news which had come to my knowledge with regard to the attack committed on Turkish territory by the Armenian revolutionary parties upon Turkish Kurds, I have now the honour to state that since their return to Persian soil these people have left the vicinity of the border, and have scattered, some going towards Russia and others to various parts of Persia.

About fourteen, as I reported on the 17th instant, have already been arrested at Salmas by the Persian authorities, and this morning a batch of some fifteen to eighteen Armenians were brought into town from those parts under strong escort, two men on every horse, their hands bound behind them, and their legs brought together under the horses' bellies.

It is suspected, however, that among these people there may be some innocent refugees from Turkey who, of course, prove easier to capture than their more alert brethren.

I have to beg that you will kindly substitute the name of "Sherif Agha" for that of "Sheikh Kader," which was given to me by mistake. "Sherif Agha" was the Kurdish Chief attacked and killed, and not "Sheikh Kader."

The question on the border at the present moment is between the Kurds and the Persians.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CECIL G. WOOD.

No. 119.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received September 13.)

(No. 598.)
My Lord, *Therapia, September 3, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum, reporting the arrival of Shakir Pasha, and his intended movements.

In view of the good reports I had previously received of Eumer Bey's conduct as Vali, I instructed Mr. Block to try and ascertain the nature of the charges against him referred to in the last paragraph of Mr. Graves' despatch.

Towfik Pasha stated that the Porte is well satisfied with Eumer Bey, and is fully aware of the groundless nature of the charges trumped up against him by a party of malcontents, and his Excellency promised to do all in his power to support Eumer Bey in the Council of Ministers should occasion arise.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 119.

Consul Graves to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 32.)
Sir, *Erzeroum, August 19, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to report that on Monday, the 16th instant, Shakir Pasha and his suite arrived at Erzeroum from Erzingian after fifteen months' absence.

I called upon him yesterday, when, in reply to my inquiries, his Excellency informed me that his intention was to remain at any rate for one month at Erzeroum, after which his movements would depend upon circumstances. During his recent visit to the Sivas Vilayet, he had purposely omitted to inspect the Sandjaks of Amasia and Tokat, on account of the presence there of the Special Commission appointed to deal with the question of the Tokat disturbances, and he is now awaiting the instructions of the Porte as to whether he should return and inspect those sandjaks. If not, he would probably pass the winter at Erzeroum.

I am informed, however, that Shakir Pasha may also have to visit Bitlis shortly, as his Excellency has just been charged to investigate the complaints made against the Vali, Eumer Bey, by various Mussulman Notables and officials of that province.

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. W. GRAVES.

No. 120.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received September 13.)

(No. 599.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, September 3, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum reporting the result of the Vali of Erzeroum's tour in the vilayet.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 120.

Consul Graves to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 33.)
Sir, *Erzeroum, August 19, 1897.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 28 of the 21st ultimo, I have the honour to report that the Vali, Raouf Pasha, after visiting the Cazas of Khinis and Passin, has returned to Erzeroum for a few days for the purpose of receiving Shakir Pasha, and will probably remain here over the Sultan's Accession Day (the 31st August) before completing his projected tour of the northern cazas of Erzeroum.

Yesterday I called upon his Excellency, and found him fairly well satisfied with the results of his inspection. At Khinis, where he had already suspended the Kaïmakam, Ismail Bey, he found such evidence of that official's misconduct as decided him to insist that he should be brought to trial. A surprise visit to Hassan Kaleh resulted in the dismissal of the Kaïmakam of Passin, together with the Cadi, the Chief of Police, and several subordinate officials, who had conspired to invent a tale of Armenian revolutionary activity, in which they tried to implicate Dikran Effendi, the second Police Commissary at Erzeroum. He hoped ultimately to get rid of all the corrupt and incapable Sub-Governors in this province, and to replace them by officials of a better class.

I took this opportunity of drawing Raouf Pasha's attention to the appointment as Kaïmakam of Aintab, in the Bayazid Sandjak, of Hakki Effendi, formerly Acting Kaïmakam of Eghin, who, according to the reports of Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Kharpût, was largely responsible for the horrible massacre at Eghin last autumn. Raouf Pasha said that he had known Hakki Effendi some years ago, when he was Vali of

Kharput, and he found it hard to believe that he could have so misconducted himself at Eghin as was alleged. At the same time, he thanked me for my warning, and promised to keep a close watch upon him, and, if necessary, to dismiss him at the first opportunity.

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. W. GRAVES.

No. 121.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received September* 13.)

(No. 601.) *Constantinople, September* 4, 1897.
My Lord,

WITH reference to my despatch No. 595 of the 2nd September, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Sivas, reporting the commutation of the sentence on the Tokat prisoners.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 121.

Major Bulman to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 18.) *Sivas, August* 24, 1897.
Sir,

I HAVE the honour to report that the sentence of death passed on fifteen of the prisoners at Tokat has been commuted to penal servitude for life. All the prisoners left Tokat last Sunday, those condemned to death for Tripoli, the others for Sinope. As disturbances were feared the prisoners were removed secretly during the night.

I have, &c.
(Signed) P. BULMAN.

No. 122.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received September* 13.)

(No. 602.) *Constantinople, September* 4, 1897.
My Lord,

WITH reference to my despatch No. 306 of the 4th May last, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Sivas reporting the sentences on prisoners for disorders at Gemerek.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 122.

Major Bulman to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 19.) *Sivas, August* 25, 1897.
Sir,

I HAVE the honour to report that the following sentences have been passed on those implicated in the disorders at Gemerek:—

One has been condemned to fifteen years' imprisonment for wounding an Armenian woman, who died from the effects of the wound.

One, an Armenian, to seven years, for endeavouring to create a disturbance.

Three, to four years' imprisonment for taking part in the disorder.

Four, to six months for assaulting an Armenian, but without doing serious harm.

I have, &c
(Signed) P. BULMAN.

No. 123.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received September* 13.)

(No. 603.)
My Lord, *Therapia, September* 7, 1897.

IN my despatch No. 426 of the 30th June I drew attention to the disorderly condition of the Kurdistan vilayets, and to the manner in which the efforts of the Valis to keep the excesses of the population within bounds are neutralized by Marshal Zekki Pasha, Commandant of the 4th Army Corps at Erzingian. The control of the Kurds appears to be left by the Palace in the hands of this officer, who treats them with great leniency, and will not permit the civil authority to employ against them the troops by which, in the absence of anything like an adequate police force, they could alone be reduced to submission, and compelled to respect the rights of property.

During the last few months things have gone from bad to worse. The raid of revolutionary Armenians from Persian territory into the Van district, has supplied a welcome pretext for retaliation, and although no renewal of the massacres has been allowed, the mountaineers have assumed a more defiant attitude, and it has become more difficult than ever to protect the Armenian villages from extortion and pillage.

From Van, Bitlis, and Erzeroum, the Consular Reports all show that the Vali's authority is crippled by the action of Zekki Pasha. Shemsi Pasha, Acting Vali of Van, who endeavoured to keep the Hamidieh regiments in check, has been superseded in the command of the troops of the province by Munir Pasha, a nominee of the Marshal. Deprived of his only means of keeping order, he has resigned his civil office as well.

The Vali of Bitlis demands in vain the surrender and punishment of the Kurdish ringleaders in the revolt at Modeki. The notorious Hussein Pasha, Chief of the Haidernanli Kurds, has been again allowed to leave Erzingian, and resume his former life of pillage in his own district of Patnos, on the borders of the Provinces of Erzeroum and Van. It has become clear, in short, that the advantage which, as I pointed out in my despatch above referred to, might possibly be derived from having at military head-quarters a powerful Commander, capable of suppressing, if he wished to do so, the turbulence of the nomad population, which now owes its impunity to him, cannot be looked for in the case of Zekki Pasha, who openly shows his contempt for the civil authority, and openly encourages crime and disorder. The Minister of War has practically no authority over the Marshal, who takes his orders directly from the Palace. It would be useless to appeal to that quarter for his recall, but I have, nevertheless, thought it advisable once more to call the attention of the Turkish Government to the increasing anarchy which prevails in the eastern vilayets. With this object Mr. Block has presented to the Grand Vizier the Memorandum herewith inclosed in copy, laying stress upon the danger of weakening the civil authority in the disturbed districts of Asia Minor.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 123.

Pro-memorid.

LA question de la division des pouvoirs civils et militaires, surtout dans les provinces Asiatiques de l'Empire, a souvent fait l'objet de représentations de la part de l'Ambassade de Sa Majesté Britannique. Mais les rapports reçus des Consuls Anglais à Erzeroum, Van, et Bitlis, prouvent que cette division continue à exister, et que, par conséquent, l'autorité des Vâlis se trouve fort entravée. Le Muchir Zeki Pacha paraît peu disposé à prêter son concours aux Valis qui, de leur part, n'exercent aucune autorité sur les troupes se trouvant dans leurs districts, et qui malgré les efforts louables qu'ils déploient pour le maintien de l'ordre se trouvent le plus souvent paralysés par le manque des moyens matériels pour assurer l'exécution des dispositions arrêtées par eux. Il ressort de maints rapports reçus que Zeki Pacha tend plutôt à favoriser les Kurdes, et à protéger ceux-ci contre toute poursuite pour les déprédations qu'ils commettent presque journellement. Ceci a eu lieu dernièrement à Boulanik et à

Akhlât, ainsi qu'à Modeki, où des troubles sérieux ont été occasionnés par les Kurdes, qui ont tué le Caïmacan, mais le Vali s'est vu refuser le concours de la force armée qu'il avait en vain réclamée en vue de rétablir l'ordre; et la mise en liberté de Hussein Pacha de Patnos est une nouvelle preuve de la faveur témoignée aux Kurdes par Zeki Pacha.

L'Ambassade de Sa Majesté désire faire remarquer de la manière la plus amicale à la Sublime Porte que cet état de choses tend à rendre impossible le maintien de l'ordre dans les vilayets mentionnés. Tout en reconnaissant la capacité, le zèle, et le dévouement de Raouf Pacha, de Shemsi Pacha, et d'Emmer Bey, elle exprime son regret de ce que les efforts de ces fonctionnaires pour assurer le bien-être et la tranquillité du pays sont destinés à échouer s'ils n'ont pas sous leurs ordres une force armée suffisante qu'ils se sont souvent vu refuser malgré leurs demandes pressantes et réitérées, ou bien si les officiers militaires commandant les troupes dans leurs districts ne reçoivent pas l'ordre formel de leur prêter un concours prompt et loyal pour le rétablissement de l'ordre, s'il venait à être menacé.

L'Ambassade de Sa Majesté se permet donc d'exprimer l'espoir que des ordres formels seront donnés au Commandant du 4e Corps d'Armée de prescrire aux Chefs de Division sous ses ordres de ne pas refuser leur concours aux Valis quand ceux-ci le demanderaient, et de s'abstenir de couvrir de leur protection les Kurdes ou autres reconnus coupables de pillage ou de méfaits semblables. Quant à Van, où le Vali *ad interim* a le grade de Général de Division, et où la situation est loin d'être satisfaisante, il serait hautement à désirer que le commandement des troupes fût laissé à Shemsi Pacha, au lieu d'être conféré à Munir Pacha, Commandant de Rédifs, qui ne paraîtrait pas avoir les capacités voulues.

No. 124.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received September* 13.)

(No. 601.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, September* 8, 1897.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 579 of the 30th ultimo, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van, respecting the movements of Armenian revolutionists in that vilayet.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 124.

Captain Elliot to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 43.)
Sir, *Van, August* 24, 1897.

I HAVE the honour to submit the following report on the doings of the Armenian revolutionists in continuation of my despatch No. 40 of the 11th instant:—

The numbers at first officially stated were greatly exaggerated, both of the assailants and those killed on either side. About 400 took part in the attack on Sherif Bey's camp. The statement as to atrocities is unconfirmed by independent testimony, and, I believe, false, though there is, unfortunately, little reason to doubt that women and children were killed when the camp was fired into.

As to the share of the Persians in this affair, I have no satisfactory information. It is possible that Persian Kurds, personal enemies of Sherif Bey, were among the assailants.

The Persian Consul-General now seems to be on good terms with the Vali.

Reports say that after the attack on Sherif Bey the Kurds in the neighbourhood were in an abject state of terror.

The revolutionists appear to have recrossed the frontier with trifling loss—about eight killed or even less.

Since this affair small bands have been roaming about the vilayet with the intention, some of getting into Van and causing trouble here, others of killing certain Kurds who have rendered themselves conspicuous by their treatment of Armenians.

At present two of these bands are said to have crossed the lake, one is in the city, and a fourth is close at hand.

That these small parties of thirty to fifty men, with a few pack animals, should be able to wander for days amongst thousands of well-armed and well-mounted Kurds is significant.

On one occasion the band, about thirty strong, that is now resting in the gardens here, were surrounded by 350 or 400 Hamidieh. They kept up a rapid fire from their magazine rifles, and after three or four Kurds were hit the road was open.

So-called fighting was reported for some days from Perigri direction, near the north-east corner of the lake, where three or four Armenians were shot and one drowned.

I am now in hopes that the men who have come into the city will go away quietly after a while. I have heard that their object, and that of the band close at hand, is to protect their countrymen against attack by the Mahommedan mob. With the welcome news received last night of Shemshi Pasha's reinstatement, this object ceases to exist, and I believe they appreciate that this is the case.

I succeeded a few days back in getting a message to them, advising them of the injury they would do their cause by wantonly provoking a massacre. Their restless indifference to the result of their actions is criminal. They are, however, under orders of a Committee in Tiflis. Whatever other opinions may be entertained of them their skill and daring are worthy of respect; while, on the other hand, the Kurds, who were all supplied with Martinis by the Government last June to enable them to defend themselves, have acted in a way that makes any plea as to the difficulty of keeping them in order ridiculous.

I have, &c.
(Signed) G. S. ELLIOT.

No. 125.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received September* 13.)

(No. 608.)
My Lord *Constantinople, September* 9, 1897.

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul-General at Beyrout reporting the visit of the Vali, Reshid Bey, to Damascus.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 125.

Consul-General Drummond Hay to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 50.)
Sir, *Beyrout, September* 3, 1897.

A RUMOUR was circulated last week in Beyrout that the Vali, Reshid Bey, had received telegraphic instructions to proceed to Damascus to arrange some differences that had arisen between Nazim Pasha and the Mushir Abdallah Pasha. His Excellency left on Saturday, the 28th August, and returned to Beyrout on the following Monday.

I have now ascertained on good authority that the true object of Reshid Bey's journey was to confer with Nazim Pasha as to the course to be followed by them in dealing with the Young Turkey Party in Syria, and that he had received instructions to that effect before leaving Constantinople to join his post.

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. DRUMMOND HAY.

No. 126.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received September 13.)

(No. 609.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, September 9, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul-General at Bagdad, transmitting the Mosul news Report.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 126.

Consul-General Loch to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 88.)
Sir, *Bagdad, August 18, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour respectfully to submit, for your Excellency's information, extracts from a news Report, dated the 10th August, 1897, from the British Consular Agent at Mosul.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. LOCH, *Lieut.-Colonel,*
Her Britannic Majesty's Consul-General, Bagdad.

Inclosure 2 in No. 126.

Mr. Rüssim to Consul-General Loch.

(No. 37.)
(Translation.) *Bagdad, August 10, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to report that about ten days ago this vilayet sent out to the district of Akr one Muhammad Khidhr, Tabour Aghasi of the mounted police (who is one of the notorious ruffians of the Hamawand), accompanied by about forty horsemen from his fellow-countrymen, in order to quell the disturbance caused by the disciples of Sheikh Birzan, who attacked a village of that district called Shoosh, of which the inhabitants are Christians and belong to Osman Agha the Zibari villain, plundered it, put fire to the castle of the said Agha, and killed one of the inhabitants. The Tabour Aghasi and his said followers on passing through the district of the seven tribes under the Central Vilayet entered the village called Jowager, plundered the property of the inhabitants and arrested the son of the Mukhtar, their uncle, on the ground of being a bad character, but taking 40 lire from him set him free. When the inhabitants of the said village came in and laid complaint before the Government, a Commanding Officer of the Gendarmerie was sent to the scene of the occurrence for inquiry, but on his return nothing appeared to have been done, so those poor people remained without redress. The aforesaid Tabour Aghasi on arrival in the said district arrested one of the ruffians (disciples of the Sheikh who had made the attack), and cast him into the prison of the district for subsequent removal to Mosul; but the next day a party of 500 of the said disciples joining together sent word to the authorities of the district threatening them that, if they would not set free the prisoner, they will attack the Government-house and get him out of the prison by force. Upon this the authorities immediately released and delivered the prisoner to them.

About three days ago when a Christian Sarraf, called Michael Khayat, was carrying on his trade in his shop in the market here at Mosul, was interfered with by his neighbour, a Mussulman Sarraf, respecting his trade, upon which a plain dispute ensued between them. The Mussulman taking offence made up a false charge, saying that the Christian had blasphemed; immediately upon this calumniation a large number of people, Mohammedans, who were passing by in the market, rushed upon him and commenced to beat him, and so they continued beating him until they brought him to the police office, and had not certain Mohammedan merchants interceded by entreaties they would have also put him in prison. This occurrence

caused some fear to the Christians, and this calamity will, perhaps, extend to all in general, for, indeed, it is a matter of injustice that the Moslem who publicly insult the Cross and the Christian religion should pass with impunity, and the Christian should be subjected to the severest punishment for the least expression of the kind taken as blasphemy.

No. 127.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received September 13.)

(No. 610.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, September 9, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that it is announced in the newspapers that when the Œcumenical and Armenian Patriarchs proceeded to the Palace on the 31st ultimo to present their congratulations on the occasion of the Sultan's accession day, His Majesty was pleased to grant their Beatitudes a private audience and to confer on them personally high decorations—on the former the Order of the Osmanieh in brilliants, and on the latter the Grand Cordon of the same Order.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

No. 128.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received September 13.)

(No. 611.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, September 9, 1897.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 482 of the 22nd July, respecting the question of the rebuilding of Christian schools and churches in Asia Minor, I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a further despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Kharput, inclosing a list of the Protestant churches and schools which were destroyed in the disturbances of 1895.

I communicated the list, together with Mr. Fontana's despatch, to M. Boyadjian, Vekil of the Protestant community.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 128.

Vice-Consul Fontana to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 36.)
Sir, *Kharput, August 15, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to return herewith to your Excellency a Memorandum reporting that the Armenian Patriarch has addressed a takrir to the competent Department with reference to the rebuilding of churches and schools destroyed during the late disturbances, and that a list of such buildings will be prepared for presentation to the Porte as soon as the Turkish Government asks for it officially.

As however Protestant churches and schools may be overlooked by the Patriarch, I have the honour to inclose a list of the Protestant buildings of the nature in question which have been destroyed in this vilayet and that of Diarbekir, and the reconstruction of which meets, in most cases, with protracted obstruction on the part of the authorities. The Protestant pastor at Malatia has written to me requesting that permission may be obtained for the repair impracticable. A Mazbata, with plans, was some time ago submitted, he states, both to the Vali and to the Porte, but so far without result. He adds that the children during school-time are exposed to the sun, owing to the fact of their school being roofless.

Among the American Mission buildings here four dwelling-houses, one church, and four school-buildings were burnt. Application was recently made to the Vali for permission to rebuild one room on these premises, and after prolonged negotiation the matter was referred to Constantinople, thus postponing the rebuilding indefinitely. Unless a Circular order be issued by the Porte to the provincial Governors-General all

such applications may henceforth be dealt with in the same manner. In certain instances buildings now repairable will soon cease to be so owing to continued exposure to the weather.

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. FONTANA.

Inclosure 2 in No. 128.

List of Protestant Churches and Schools destroyed in the Disturbances of 1895.

Place.	Church or Chapel.	Boys' Schools.	Girls' Schools.
Vilayet of Mamouret-el-Aziz.			
Hatoussig	1	1	1
Khoyalou	1	1	1
Malatia	..	..	..
Shepik	1	1	1
Bizmisham	1	1	..
Eski Malatia	1	1	..
Garmuri	1	1	..
Hokh	..	..	..
Kessovik	1	1	..
Mujaran	1	1	..
Pertek			
Vilayet of Diarbekir.			
Chiounkush	1	1	1
Palou	1 (rebuilding)	1	..
Dibneh	1	1	..
Kilisseh	1	1	..
Habech	..		

No. 129.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received September 13.)

(No. 612.)
My Lord, *Therapia, September 9, 1897.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 586 of the 2nd instant, I have the honour to report that, in reply to further representations, the Minister of the Interior has stated that Reshid Bey, the Mudir of Bawarah, has been dismissed and replaced by Hadji Mahmoud Effendi, whose appointment has already been approved by the Sublime Porte.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

No. 130.

Consul-General Wood to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received September 15.)

(No. 7.)
My Lord, *Tabriz, August 26, 1897.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 6 of the 25th instant, I have the honour to forward, for your Lordship's information, the copy of a further despatch I have this day addressed to Her Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran, giving the latest information received by me with regard to the doings of the late bands of Armenian revolutionary parties on the border, the arrest of some among them, and the attitude of the Azerbaijan officials in these matters.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CECIL G. WOOD.

Inclosure in No. 130.

Consul-General Wood to Mr. C. Hardinge.

(No. 27.)
Sir, *Tabreez, August 26, 1897.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 7, reporting the dispersion of the Armenian revolutionary bands which had returned to Persia after their attack and slaughter of a tribe of Turkish Kurds under the Chieftainship of Shereef Agha, and the subsequent arrest of some of these people by the Persian authorities, I have now the honour to state that the number of the Armenians brought into Tabriz on the morning of the 23rd instant amounted to twenty, of whom seven only were shown to belong to the raiders.

Among them were five Russian subjects who were given up to their national authorities here, thirteen Turkish subjects who are to be or have been sent to Khoi, and two Persians who are still kept in custody, and will doubtless have to come to some amicable arrangement with their authorities before regaining their liberty.

Since my last report some 14,000 cartridges, of the latest Russian military pattern, have been discovered in an Armenian shop, and confiscated by the authorities.

From reports which have reached me, it appears that before marching upon Shereef Agha's camp, the Armenian revolutionists perpetrated smaller raids, during which they behaved with great ferocity, for, as I am informed, on reliable authority, they continually brought back to Persian territory, besides booty and captured women, sacks filled with the amputated breasts of women and the ears and noses of men.

The attitude of the Persian Government in the matter of the Armenian revolutionists is to be greatly deplored, for beyond the few arrests, *post facto*, which I have reported, it has done nothing to save the territory of a neighbouring Power, with whom they are at peace, from ferocious raids, and its representatives in the south-western districts are even now, according to all reports, solely occupied in making capital out of the fears and distress of innocent people by threats of arrest, exposure and other menaces, instead of setting themselves to bring back peace and quiet in the alarmed and disturbed portions of this province which are under their charge, and where brigands and thieves, taking advantage of circumstances, plunder and kill at their own will and pleasure.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CECIL G. WOOD.

No. 131.

The Marquess of Salisbury to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 242.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, September 18, 1897.*

I HAVE received your Excellency's despatch No. 603 of the 7th instant with regard to the disorderly condition of the Vilayets of Kurdistan, owing largely to the action of Zekki Pasha.

I approve the representations which your Excellency has made to the Porte on this subject.

I am, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 132.

Mr. C. Hardinge to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received September 20.)

(No. 108.)
My Lord, *Gulhek, August 24, 1897.*

UPON the 18th May last I received from Her Majesty's Consul-General at Tabreez reliable information to the effect that a band of Armenians belonging to the Revolutionary party were assembling in the Plain of Salmas, that they were procuring arms, and that they were preparing an immediate raid into Turkey, with a view to attacking the Kurds.

I lost no time in bringing this information to the knowledge of the Persian

Government, and I repeatedly urged upon the Mushir-ed-Dowleh the imperative necessity of taking immediate steps to prevent any raid across the Turkish frontier, which would be likely to embitter relations between the Persian and Turkish Governments and to provoke reprisals against the Christians both in Persia and Turkey. Mr. Wood made similar representations to the Governor-General of Tabreez.

The Mushir-ed-Dowleh repeatedly assured me that there was no cause for alarm, and that the necessary troops had been sent to maintain order in the district of Salmas.

Upon the receipt of your Lordship's telegram No. 16 of the 6th August, I made further representations to the Mushir-ed-Dowleh, strongly impressing upon his Excellency the necessity of the Persian Government taking immediate action to prevent any movement across the frontier.

Unfortunately the Turkish frontier had been already crossed at dawn on the 6th instant, and the attack already made upon the Kurdish encampment. It is difficult to know the exact number of those killed by the Armenians, Mr. Wood estimating the Kurdish losses at over 400 of both sexes, while the Turkish Embassy state that 200 Kurds were killed, of whom there were sixty-eight women and forty-eight children. The Turkish Ambassador has also informed me that horrible cruelties and mutilations were perpetrated upon the Kurds by the Armenians, and that a large number of horses and cattle were destroyed by them. The Armenian revolutionaries appear to have lost only seven men and to have retreated across the Persian frontier.

After hearing of these occurrences I took an early opportunity of seeing the Mushir-ed-Dowleh, when I reminded his Excellency of the assurances which he had given me, and I reproached him with not having seen that they were properly carried out.

His Excellency declared to me that the Persian Government had sent stringent orders to the Governor-General of Tabreez, who apparently with the lapse of time had been lulled into a false sense of security, and had done nothing to hinder the preparations of the revolutionaries. He stated, however, that a large number of those who attacked the Kurdish camp were Turkish Armenians, who had joined the others as they crossed the frontier.

I also strongly recommended both the Prime Minister and the Minister for Foreign Affairs to take immediate steps for the arrest and disarmament of those Armenians who had returned to Persian territory, and to give no further cause for the excitement and agitation undoubtedly existing across the frontier.

Upon the 17th instant I was told by the Turkish Ambassador that he had had an interview with the Shah, and, in accordance with his instructions, had spoken to His Majesty in very strong terms, and had formulated the following demands for the violation of Turkish territory:—

1. Arrest and punishment of the offenders.
2. Indemnity to the families of those killed and to the wounded.
3. Punishment of the civil and military authorities who should have taken steps to prevent the raid.
4. An assurance that measures would be taken to prevent the recurrence of similar incidents in the future.
5. Formal apology to the Turkish Government.

His Excellency informed me at the same time that he had been instructed to state that unless these conditions were accepted good relations between Turkey and Persia would become endangered.

As the demands of the Turkish Government appeared to me to be extremely moderate, I strongly recommended the Persian Government to lose no time in accepting them, and to do what they could to repair the shortcomings of their officials, who were undoubtedly very much to blame for their apathy and inaction. Both the Prime Minister and the Minister for Foreign Affairs have since assured me that they have come to terms with the Turkish Government on the subject.

I learn from the Russian Legation that the Emperor of Russia having received a telegram from the Sultan asking for His Imperial Majesty's assistance in this matter, M. Stcheglow received instructions from Count Mouravieff to support the demands of the Turkish Ambassador.

Mr. Wood has reported to me that the revolutionary Armenians have been dispersed, about eighty of them proceeding towards the Russian frontier; that fourteen Armenians have been arrested at Salmas, and others in the neighbourhood of Tabreez, including Joseph Mirzaiantz, their Treasurer. According to a later telegram the latter has escaped from his guards, probably through bribery.

Reports received from the Turkish frontier state that great excitement prevails everywhere against all Christians owing to the raid of the revolutionary Armenians, and to a recent incident, when the Christians of Mawana killed two Turkish soldiers who were carrying off their sheep. A large body of Kurds belonging to the Mazaki and Shekaki tribes have already sacked some Armenian villages in the district of Salmas, and are said to be awaiting a favourable opportunity for raiding the districts of Salmas and Urumiah in force.

I am informed by the Mushir-ed-Dowleh, who is very apprehensive of the outbreak of future serious troubles, that he has already instructed the Persian Minister in London by telegraph to acquaint your Lordship with the state of affairs on the Turkish frontier, and to request your Lordship's good offices in urging the Turkish Government to take the necessary military measures for exercising restraint upon the Kurds.

In the meantime two battalions of Persian infantry, with a small body of cavalry and artillery, have been sent as reinforcements to the 4,000 Persian troops already stationed upon the frontier.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES HARDINGE.

No. 133.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received September 20.)

(No. 618.)
My Lord, *Therapia, September 11, 1897.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 501 of the 28th July, forwarding Mr. Crow's Report on his journey in the Sasun and Guendj districts, I have the honour to transmit herewith a copy of a Notice from the Sublime Porte which I have received in answer to my representations on the subject of the forced conversions and military exemption tax.

I have, &c,
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 133.

Notice.

LE Gouverneur-Général du Vilayet de Bitlis, interpellé à propos des faits mentionnés dans la Notice de l'Ambassade de Sa Majesté Britannique en date du 5 du mois écoulé, télégraphie que les Arméniens qui avaient embrassé l'Islamisme lors des derniers désordres sont déjà revenus à leur ancienne croyance sans qu'aucune pression ait été exercé sur eux pour les amener à y renoncer.

Quant à la perception de la taxe d'exonération militaire des Arméniens du Sandjak de Guendj, aucune irrégularité n'a été commise à ce sujet par les autorités Impériales. Quelques individus qui ne se trouvaient pas inscrits sur les registres du cens, avaient, il est vrai, déclaré qu'ils se convertiraient à l'Islamisme si la taxe d'exonération militaire leur était demandée pour les années écoulées depuis la date de leur naissance, mais sur la réponse des autorités locales que leur conversion n'aurait nullement pour effet de les soustraire au paiement de cette taxe pour les dites années, ils n'ont pas changé de religion.

La taxe dont il s'agit sera perçue sur la base sus-indiquée avec celle qui sera payée cette année par les habitants des localités dont les individus précités sont originaires.

Le 7 Septembre, 1897.

No. 134.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received September 20.)

(No. 625.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, September 14, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Smyrna, reporting that the

Alasheir–Oushak section of the prolongation of the Smyrna–Cassaba Railway to Kara-Hissar was opened to traffic on the 6th instant.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 134.

Consul Cumberbatch to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 90.)
Smyrna, September 10, 1897.

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to report that the first section of the prolongation of the Smyrna-Cassaba Railway to Afioun Kara-Hissar, viz., the portion between Alasheir and Oushak, has been terminated, and was opened to traffic on the 6th instant.

I beg leave to inclose herewith a few notes on the new line.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. A. CUMBERBATCH.

Inclosure 2 in No. 134.

Notes by Consul Cumberbatch respecting the Smyrna–Cassaba Railway Extension.

THE Alasheir–Oushak section of the projected extension of the Smyrna–Cassaba Railway from its inland terminus at Alasheir to Afioun Kara-Hissar was completed and opened to traffic on the 6th September.

This section (Alasheir Oushak) is 73 miles long. Added to the 104 miles between Smyrna and Alasheir, the 56 miles between Magnesia and Soma, and the 5 miles between Smyrna and Bournabat, this brings the total worked by the French Company to 238 miles. The further extension from Oushak to Afioun Kara-Hissar, now under construction, will add another 83 miles.

The Alasheir–Oushak section has six stations, *i.e.*, Kinlik, Konaklar, Gremaikeui, Evanlar, Imi and Kara Koujou. The country it passes through is well cultivated and wooded as far as Kinlik where a very mountainous region is reached, to surmount the difficulties of which great engineering skill has been displayed. The line winds through rocky parts up a heavy gradient.

There are twenty tunnels at short intervals and three viaducts, one of which is 522 feet long and has a central arch of 99 feet wide and 147 feet high.

It is only on nearing Oushak that the country becomes fertile again. Oushak, 3,000 feet above sea level, is both an agricultural and an industrial centre. Its chief industry is carpet manufacture, and the chief agricultural products are barley, valonea, and opium.

(Signed) H. A. CUMBERBATCH.

Smyrna, September 10, 1897.

No. 135.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received September 20.)

(No. 626.)
Constantinople, September 14, 1897.

My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van respecting the general condition of that vilayet and the necessity of maintaining Shemshi Pasha as Vali.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 135.

Vice-Consul Elliot to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 45.)
Van, September 1, 1897.

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to submit the following general Report on the present state of affairs:—

The announcement that Shemshi Pasha had been reinstated caused great rejoicing here. I have heard that a massacre had been planned for the day of his intended departure. There is no doubt that the liveliest apprehensions were entertained by all classes here on the news of his dismissal, except, of course, the blackguard element I have referred to before.

The news, however, received on the 27th that he is deprived of command of the troops is equally serious, and perhaps more significant. The bulk of the people here do not appreciate the importance of this, and confidence continues unabated.

Shemshi Pasha will, however, resign the Governorship unless the command of the troops is restored to him. My colleagues and myself agree that he has no other course open to him.

Disorders will occur which he will be powerless to check, and which will be made an excuse for punishing him for standing well with the Consuls.

I am now inclined to believe that Zekki will not dare to promote a general massacre here, at any rate at present. He knows that he has been accused of wishing to do so, and that should such an event occur, the storm that would be raised would be too much even for him.

There will, however, be no security for Christians in Asiatic Turkey as long as he is here. My French colleague and I are perfectly at one on this point.

Men are worth more than measures in this country. We feel that the very first step, if an advance towards the amelioration of the present state of affairs is to be made, must be to get rid of the man who was decorated for his share in the Sasun massacres, who has opposed with all his power every honest official in this country, and who has been at the bottom of and has protected the authors of every Kurdish outrage.

The shortsighted and cruel policy of using the Kurds to terrorize and keep under the Armenians is execrated by every right-thinking man, whatever may be his creed.

Turks sometimes openly declare that the Armenian revolutionists are right, that the wrongs inflicted on their people are past endurance, and loudly denounce the Sultan and his Government.

They recognize that their country is being ruined, that this must come, and I believe there are those who hold the idea that they should stop short at nothing that will bring the whole edifice in ruins about their heads, and the Sultan with it.

I was asked by the Vali to enter into communication with the revolutionists, and make them an offer of a free pardon if they would surrender.

I did not succeed in seeing any of the men themselves. I fancy they feared they would be compromised with their party if they were known to have any relations with me. Further, they admitted a fear that diversity of opinion among themselves would be caused by an interview. My messages, however, reached them. I also saw the sister of Dikran Diroyan, a noted malcontent, who has given the Government a great deal of trouble, and who led the band, about thirty strong, that broke through about 400 Hamidieh that had surrounded them.

Some weeks ago this girl, who is credited with being a noted revolutionist, appealed to me for protection, and I spoke to Shemshi Pasha and the Muavin on her behalf.

After the failure of my attempts to see Diroyan himself, I sent for her, and explained to her that if these men, whose presence armed in the gardens was a menace to peace, provoked disorder of any sort here, they would only harm their people and their cause. I warned them of the danger they stood in of betrayal, and of the probability that if in resisting arrest they were to kill a soldier or two, the mob would get out of hand, and the scenes of last June here be repeated. Further, they only had it in their power under present circumstances to do harm. I pointed to the reinstatement of Shemshi Pasha as a sign that better days might be hoped for, and promised to telegraph and ask your Excellency to support his proposal to offer a free pardon provided they would surrender, and would give what I considered satisfactory guarantees of an intention to behave as peaceable citizens.

The girl pretended she knew nothing of her brother or his whereabouts. This, however, was only natural. I have been told that she accepted my invitation with his consent and that of his comrades, and went straight to them after our conversation.

That evening twelve are reported to have left, and yesterday I heard that Diroyan had left the gardens, and was assembling his band with the intention of

returning to Persia. I can form no opinion as yet as to the truth or otherwise of these rumours.

The population, however, still continue to see in Shemshi Pasha's presence here a guarantee of security.

Mr. Allen is doing excellent work in buying and distributing cattle to the villagers, and sometimes seed.

In one or two districts people who had left are returning to their homes on hearing of the help that was being given. Should better days come, I am told by those who know the people that most of them would return to their deserted villages.

A further proof of the feeling of security in the districts is that within the last few days villagers have been coming and asking for cattle.

If the Mushir triumphs eventually, this desirable condition of affairs will cease to exist, and the people will again be plunged into the misery from which they are just emerging.

With all their faults, it is but fair to remember that they are the fruits of oppression; these people are thrifty and industrious to an exceptional degree, and have shown a power of endurance of cruel misfortunes that is nothing short of marvellous. They do not appear wanting in courage, and certainly not in intelligence. With good government they might become valuable citizens, and a source of power to the State.

I have, &c.
(Signed) G. ELLIOT.

No. 136.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received September 20.)

(No. 627.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, September 14, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van respecting the deplorable condition of the Armenians in the Ardjish district of the vilayet.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 136.

Vice-Consul Elliot to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 46.)
Sir, *Van, September 1, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to report that since writing my last despatch, No. 45, I have seen the Muavin of Van, who has just returned from the Ardjish district, north of the lake.

He gives a pitiable description of the state of the Armenians still left there. They are absolutely slaves, and in return for working for their Kurdish masters, get but just enough to keep them alive. Their gardens destroyed, their goods taken from them, cattle turned into the crops, children huddle naked in the empty houses, and any man who dares to object has his eyes gouged out.

On Saturday last, the 28th, there was very nearly being a massacre in Ardjish.

Some Kurds were looting a passing caravan. Shots were fired. An alarm spread that the Armenian revolutionists had come. The Kurds rushed to arms and mounted. The Christians began to flee, and some blackguards ran through the bazaar calling out that now was the time for those who loved the prophet.

The soldiers who had been fired on by the Kurds were, fortunately, annoyed. The ringleaders of the disturbance were arrested and detained, in spite of the wish of the mob to have them released. They were chiefly Hamidieh officers.

The news of the dismissal of Shemshi Pasha from the command of the troops had reached the Kurds before this incident, and their rejoicing over it was great. Jekki is a King among them; they recognize no authority but his. The opinion is

that he means to make himself a Prince of an independent Kurdistan. At times, I suspect he has encouragement from Russia. The reluctance of the Russian Consul to attack him, though I believe as fully convinced as my French colleague and myself of the necessity of getting rid of him, inclines me to this opinion. It is only by keeping before him the imminent danger the poor creatures around us are in that we can secure his co-operation.

My colleagues and I believe that the reports from Ardjish are not exaggerated. I was unable to visit Ardjish owing to recent disturbances, but all accounts agree as to the sad state of affairs there. I fear that there are terrible times in store for the Christians if the Mushir triumphs.

The general idea is that he is working for himself, and any disturbance that can weaken and discredit the Sultan's Government he will use to his own advantage.

It is reported that certain Persian villages were raided by Turkish Kurds in revenge for the Armenian attack. The Persian Kurds contemplate retaliation. In any case the look-out for the Christians in that direction is gloomy.

In my opinion, this would not have occurred had Shemshi Pasha not been interfered with.

I have, &c.
(Signed) G. F. ELLIOT.

No. 137.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received September 20.)

(No. 629.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, September 16, 1897.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 429 of the 1st July last, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Kharput respecting the restitution to their Armenian owners of land seized by Mussulmans at Hidj.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 137.

Vice-Consul Fontana to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 40.)
Sir, *Kharput, August 31, 1897.*

IN accordance with the instructions conveyed in your Excellency's despatch of the 1st ultimo regarding the restitution to their Armenian owners of land seized by Mussulmans at Hidj, I have the honour to report that the Vali, who returned a few days ago from his tour of inspection to Mauden, Arabkir, and Eghin, now informs me that before quitting the latter town he instructed the Kaïmakam to proceed to Hidj and superintend in person the surrender of those lands to their lawful proprietors.

The Vali adds that he has since received complaints from Moslems of the Hidj district as to action taken by the Kaïmakam in regard to lands to which Armenians lay claim, whereupon he infers that his instructions to Rifaat Effendi are being satisfactorily carried out.

I shall not fail to report to your Excellency such further details as I may succeed in collecting with reference to the reversion of the lands in question.

I have, &c.
(Signed) RAPHAEL A. FONTANA.

No. 138.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received September 20.*)

(No. 630.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, September 16, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Damascus respecting the movements of the tribes in the Hauran.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 138.

Consul Richards to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 47.)
Sir, *Damascus, September 6, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to report to your Excellency that a conflict recently took place at a spot known as Ain Hamer in the Lejah between the Imperial troops and a considerable body of Hauranese (Moslems) and Bedouin, the result of which was that ten soldiers were killed and about twenty of their opponents, their being several persons wounded on both sides. The fighting appears to have lasted in a somewhat desultory and intermittent fashion for two whole days, viz., the 27th and 28th ultimo, the origin of the conflict being the opposition on the part of the troops to the approach of the Hauranese and Bedouin to the water spring, from which the name of the place (Ain Hamer) is taken, and the equally persistent efforts of the latter to force their way to the coveted spot.

Subsequently one battalion of troops left for Sheikh Miskin.

I am also informed that after the conflict at Ain Hamer a considerable number of Druses—said to be 150—coming from the southern part of the Jebel Druse, viz., the villages of Salkhad, Orman, Melah, and others started off for the Lejah with the object of joining hands with the Hauranese and Bedouin. Previously to their departure a large meeting was held at Orman, at which a number of Druses from the northern district of the Jebel were present. In the course of the discussion which ensued the southern Druses proposed, it is alleged, that they should attack and, if possible, kill the Kaïmakam of the Jebel as well as such troops as he had with him, to which project, however, the northerners strongly objected. After the Southern Druses had left for the Lejah, as stated above, the Kaïmakam summoned all the Mudirs of the Jebel (Druses) to his presence and asked them the meaning of the meeting at Orman. Their reply, naturally evasive, was to the effect that a number of their compatriots who had been banished to Crete had returned, and as they (the Mudirs) could not give any support or countenance to men who were under the displeasure of the Government the returned exiles had joined camps with the Bedouin, and it was they who were causing this trouble and excitement. The Kaïmakam is reported to have replied, somewhat vaguely, that the matter would be arranged.

On the 30th ultimo a mixed band of Hauranese and Bedouin went to Inkhill, a Christian village in the Hauran, and tried to induce the inhabitants to follow their example in the matter of emigration to the Lejah. On the Inkhillis refusing to do so they were attacked and one of their number killed, while twelve were so severely wounded that five of them are reported to have died of their wounds. Since this occurrence it would appear that soldiers have been stationed in all the Christian villages of that district to protect them against such outrages.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. S. RICHARDS.

No. 139.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received September 22.*)

(No. 583.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, September 22, 1897, noon.*

THE British Vice-Consul at Van telegraphed yesterday :—

The state of this district is as follows :

Armenian revolutionary bands have been broken up. The Kurds arrested for disturbance in Ardjish, reported in my despatch No. 46 of the 1st instant, have arrived here in chains.

Your Excellency's telegram of 12th September refers to two revolutionary bands. These were escaping to Persia from Van. The whole of one band (ten persons) were either taken prisoners or killed. The other band, consisting of nine, made good their escape. It is said that about twelve Armenians have gone to Nordoust with the intention, probably, of killing Shekir, the notorious brigand whom the Government have lately pardoned. They are being pursued by a company of infantry. Some fifty Armenians, most of whom are probably innocent, are in prison here on suspicion of being revolutionaries. As I have hopes that justice will be promptly administered, I reserve details for the present. Fifteen Armenians handed up by the Persian Government await trial at Bashkala. Most of the reports of affairs in Van published by the "Times" are false. The military force in this region consists of twenty-five battalions of infantry, two regiments of cavalry, one battery of field artillery, and two of mountain artillery. The infantry battalions are each 550 strong. Martini rifles have been served out to five more Hamidieh squadrons, so that 1,200 of these troops, that is, ten squadrons of 120, are now armed with this weapon.

Though the prospects of good government seem remote, it may be said that the general danger has passed away for the present.

No. 140.

The Marquess of Salisbury to Mr. C. Hardinge.

(No. 80.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, September 24, 1897.*

I HAVE received your despatch No. 108 of the 24th ultimo relative to a raid of Armenian revolutionists from Persia into the Vilayet of Van.

I approve your action in connection with this matter.

I am, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY

No. 141.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received September 25.*)

(No. 586. Confidential.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, September 25, 1897, 10 A.M.*

I HEAR on good authority that the Armenian revolutionists will endeavour shortly to bring about further massacres by throwing bombs into the mosques.

No. 142.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received September 27.)

(No. 611.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, September* 18, 1897.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 507 of the 28th July, inclosing a despatch from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van, urging the necessity of exiling Sheikh Sadik from the Hekkiari district, I have now the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a communication received from the Sublime Porte in reply to my representations on the subject.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 142.

Memorandum.

LE Gouverneur-Général *ad interim* du Vilayet de Van, interpellé à propos des plaintes formulées contre le Cheikh Sadik, répond que les renseignements fournis à ce sujet à l'Ambassade de Sa Majesté Britannique sont inspirés par un parti pris manifeste.

En effet, le dit Cheikh ne s'est point livré à des procédés vexatoires à l'égard des Nestoriens de cette province.

Les onze Nestoriens mentionnés dans la notice de l'Ambassade Royale en date du 5 du mois écoulé ayant été assassinés non point à Kattomon, mais bien sur le territoire Persan, il est évident que les auteurs des crimes dont il s'agit sont des Persans.

L'assertion comme quoi le Cheikh Sadik aurait mis le feu à la maison d'un cousin du Métropolitain Nestorien nommé Chiri et pillé plus tard la maison et l'église de ce religieux, qui n'oserait plus sortir de Kochannès, est dénuée de tout fondement. Du reste, il n'existe dans le vilayet aucune localité du nom de Zivan.

L'affaire du meurtre de Kacha Serhan est en cours d'examen devant le Juge d'Instruction près le Tribunal Correctionnel du chef-lieu de la province.

Le Sheikh Sadik n'a nullement l'intention de franchir la frontière. Au contraire, les autorités Persanes ont distribué des armes aux habitants de Maraua et poussent les agitateurs Arméniens se trouvant dans ces parages à faire une nouvelle irruption dans le Vilayet de Van.

Sublime Porte, le 15 Septembre, 1897.

No. 143.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received September 27.)

(No. 614.)
My Lord, *Therapia, September* 22, 1897.

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a letter I have received from the Acting British Vice-Consul at Bitlis, reporting on the general state of the vilayet, the critical position of the Vali, and the misdeeds of the Kurds.

I have informed Mr. Crow by telegraph that he is at liberty to visit Sairt in connection with the recovery of the money stolen from Yusuf Yunan, if he considers that his journey is likely to produce any good result.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 143.

Vice-Consul Crow to Sir P. Currie.

Dear Sir Philip Currie, *Monastery of Khintig Gudat, September* 5, 1897.

I WENT into Bitlis on receipt of your Excellency's telegrams of the 1st and 4th September regarding Yusuf Yunan, which were forwarded to me on my way from Akhlat to Khigan. I have transmitted the substance of the information I received by telegraph. I found the Vali in very poor health from over-anxiety and continued residence in Bitlis, which is far from healthy in the summer. He was, moreover, utterly disheartened at the condition of his vilayet and the way in which he was checked at every turn by the Mushir at Erzinghian. He said under existing circumstances he was powerless to do anything to improve matters. Zekki Pasha was absolutely corrupt, and did nothing but extort money from rebellious Kurds, Kurdish Chiefs, and Hamidiehs as the price of his silence. The Vali's request for permission and means to punish the Modeki tribes was met by Zekki Pasha with a statement to the effect that, if pressure were brought to bear on Modeki, the inhabitants would join hands with the Sasunli Armenians and collect a force of 15,000 men in Palori and cause a general revolt. Palori and the neighbourhood consists of barren rock with barely means of support for its own scanty population, yet this obviously absurd argument has carried weight with the Porte and Modeki has been left for the Vali to deal with single-handed. The murderer of the Kaimakam, the Alay Bey and his companions, have not been handed over to justice, and nothing has been effected beyond the restoration of a few arms taken from the murdered men. The Modehanlis agreed to accept Dervish Bey, a prominent Kurd of Bitlis and a descendant of the old Deli Beys here, as Kaimakam, and he has accordingly been dispatched to the mountain to use his influence in pacifying the inhabitants. I am well acquainted with him. He is thoroughly straightforward and honest, and being of the same race may do some good, but his position will be a critical one if he tries to get hold of the culprits. Meanwhile, the Kurds are plundering up to the very gates of Bitlis and keep the country in a general state of alarm by their escapades. The Vali's own workmen on the Sairt road are attacked, and nothing seems safe from them.

Akhlat, Boulangk, and Malaspid, where I have been for the last nineteen days, are still a prey to the Hamidiehs, who rule the country in spite of Vali and Military Commander. Behiadin Pasha, the Commander at Malaspid, has received from Riza Agha, the Kurdish Chief who has just come to Bitlis to take his trial for brigandage, a sum of 150 to 200 liras to hold his tongue as to the latter's misdeeds, and any evidence against him will be consequently difficult, if not impossible, to procure. Though nominally a prisoner, he is the guest of the Mufti, while his followers loot the country round, and on my way to Akhlat I was met by peasants, whose property and animals had been taken by them. Aghaz, in Akhlat, was robbed and a relation of my Dragoman severely beaten the night after I left the village by the troopers of Fatullah Bey, Raza Agha's brother. They were overtaken by gendarmes and abandoned a portion of the loot, amongst other things two Hamidieh horses with the brand of Fatullah Bey's own regiment. Shots were exchanged, but the gendarmes have orders not to aim at Kurds, and always fire in the air.

While in Boulangk Paghand was attacked by servants of Ayas Agha and a Lieutenant in command of the zaptiehs, sent in pursuit, so badly wounded that his chances of recovery are doubtful. The Vali is acquainted with everything that goes on, but admits his powerlessness to cope with the situation single-handed. According to his own statement, the Mutessarif of Mush is a coward and the man at Sairt a thief, so I fear our prospect of getting anything back from the murderers of Yusuf Yunan is a feeble one. If your Excellency likes, I will go to Sairt in October to see if I can do anything in the matter, but I fear from what the Vali says that the murderers are men of straw. The Van disturbances have complicated matters in this district, and a small band of revolutionaries have made their way to Akhlat with the intention of punishing the Hyderanli Kurds for their share in the disturbances of 1896. The Kurds one and all are miserable cowards, and if any resistance is offered by Armenians to their plundering and thefts, they denounce the latter as revolutionaries, and the Government, who lend a too willing ear to this information, thereupon visit the village with fines and imprisonment, so that the

inhabitants would have done better to abandon their property in the first instance without opposition.

It is useless to talk of reforms here at present as order must be restored first, and as long as Zekki Pasha has influence at the Palace and maintains his post as Mushir at Erzinghian no tranquillity seems possible.

Believe me, &c.
(Signed) F. E. CROW.

No. 144.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received September 27.)

(No. 616.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, September 23, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Diarbekir, reporting on the general condition of that Vilayet, and I beg to call your Lordship's attention to the improvement in the state of affairs as noted by Mr. Waugh.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 144.

Vice-Consul Waugh to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 12.)
Sir, *Diarbekir, September 6, 1897.*

I HAVE now visited both Mutessarifliks, and seven out of the eleven Kaïmakamliks in this vilayet, and my impression is that the general condition of the province is no longer so deplorable as described by Mr. Hallward last year.

The harvest is a good one; but the area sown in many of the Christian villages was necessarily limited.

The people seem to me to be taking heart again. In some cases I found them rebuilding their houses.

Considering that two years have not yet elapsed since the extraordinary blow which was dealt this country, the progress towards recovery seems to me as quick as could be expected. It is to the innate spirit of resignation in the population rather than to any special effort of the administration that this must be attributed. The Relief Fund has also undoubtedly helped.

With regard to the reforms, I see nothing to add to Mr. Hallward's remarks in his despatch No. 22 of the 26th October last year. If any reforms were seriously contemplated, the appointment of suitable and properly paid officials should be the first.

From what I have seen, this is especially necessary in this vilayet in the case of the Kaïmakams.

All the cazas of this vilayet are third-class Kaïmakamliks, the salary attaching to which is 1,200 piastres per month, now reduced, in conformity with the Budget, to 1,080 piastres.

An *ad interim* Kaïmakam receives half the salary of the post, i.e., 5 liras a-month. Public security depends on the efforts of these officials and their influence over the local Beys. At the present time six of the eleven cazas in this vilayet are administered by *ad interim* nominees.

The Vali has applied to the Ministry to have these appointments filled up, but it seems that candidates for these remote and ill-paid posts are not forthcoming.

Petty details of crime, committed in many cases with comparative impunity, can be of no interest to Her Majesty's Embassy. The amount is, perhaps, not abnormal, but public security is seriously affected.

Khaled Bey, the Vali, seems to be doing his best. But he is not an ideal

administrator for a province of Kurdistan. He is a lawyer, and his panacea is a petition to the Law Courts.

A serious reproach to his administration is his failure to recover any of the Christian women carried off by the Kurds nearly two years ago. After long pressure, and repeated requests for time, he finally declared that the amnesty prevented his taking any coercive steps against the ravishers. My French colleague, who had the question in hand, reported to his Embassy, and there the matter rests.

Two Christian women took refuge in this Consulate this summer after escaping from their Kurdish husbands. In each case I obtained without difficulty their official recognition as Christians; the babies were, however, adjudged by the Sheri Court to the fathers.

The Hamidieh troopers, of whom there are ten regiments in the west and south of the vilayet, are reported to be causing the Government embarrassment in the collection of taxes and sale of the tithes.

The Mutessarif of Mardin has exchanged posts with him of Karahissar, Sharki, which exchange means promotion for the latter from a third class to a second class sandjak. It is to be hoped that Mardin may profit by the change, for I hear bad accounts of the insecurity and disorder there.

I am applying by telegram for authority to visit the district.

I have, &c.
(Signed) A. T. WAUGH.

No. 145.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received September 27.)

(No. 617.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, September 23, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul-General at Beirout, reporting on a tour which he made recently in the Lebanon, and his visit to Naoum Pasha.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 145.

Consul-General Drummond Hay to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 55.)
Sir, *Beirout, September 11, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to inform your Excellency that I took the opportunity of the anniversary of the Sultan's accession to visit Naoum Pasha at his residence in the Lebanon, and to offer him my congratulations on the renewal of his appointment as Governor-General.

I also made a short tour in the mixed district of Shouf and in the Christian Kaïmakamlik of Djezzin.

During my stay at Beit-Eddin, deputations were continually arriving from all parts of the mountain to congratulate his Excellency. Several of the Kaïmakams had wished to present themselves with large followings of people from their districts but they were all forbidden to make any demonstrations with the exception of the neighbouring Kaïmakams who appeared with several hundred armed mountaineers.

The anniversary of the Sultan's accession was also marked by universal rejoicings, and the illuminations of Beit-Eddin Serai, and its surroundings were exceptionally brilliant.

The renewal of Naoum Pasha's term of office has given general satisfaction among Lebanon officials, and I think that the majority of the population is glad to retain a Governor who is known for his integrity and humanity.

Naoum Pasha expressed to me his acknowledgments of the support he had received from the Ambassadors of the Great Powers, and stated that he would endeavour to show that it had been well merited.

While at Beit-Eddin I received your Excellency's despatch inclosing correspondence regarding the reappointment of Naoum Pasha, but up to that time his Excellency had not received any instructions from the Porte on his appointment.

I begged him to let me know when they arrived, and expressed my hopes that he would strictly observe the stipulations of the Protocol as to the independence of magistrates and freedom of elections. His Excellency gave me satisfactory assurances as to the magistrates, and stated that he was awaiting instructions in order to open an inquiry relating to the misconduct of a Judge.

On referring to the elections, his Excellency would not admit that there was any need for reform in the system of balloting, and endeavoured to convince me that I had been misinformed as to the interference of the Government at the polls, but he was willing to take into consideration any modifications that I might suggest with a view to insure greater freedom.

When passing through Deir-el-Kamar on my way to Beit-Eddin, I received a deputation of the inhabitants who reminded me of the memorial they had addressed to the Ambassadors of the Great Powers with reference to the establishment of a Christian Kaïmakamlik in the Shouf, by extending the independent Mudirlik of Deir-el-Kamar. They said that they attached great importance to the views I might hold on the subject owing to the opposition which would certainly be made by the Druzes through my medium.

I informed them, in reply, that as their Petition had been addressed direct to the Sublime Porte and to the Ambassadors, it was out of my power to give them an opinion on the subject without instructions from your Excellency, but I could assure them that the question, if entered into, would be equitably dealt with, and that the demands both of Maronites and Druzes would have to be fully examined before arriving at any definite conclusion as to their respective merits.

The two Druze Spiritual Heads and other Chiefs afterwards spoke to me on the same subject when I passed through their districts, and asked my opinion as to the course they should pursue to keep the Shouf intact as a Druse province in accordance with the stipulations of the Organic Laws of the Lebanon. My advice to these people was to remain quiet and to pay no heed to the Deir-el-Kamar Petition until the reply of the Sublime Porte was received by the Governor-General, when they would be better able to judge as to the measures they should adopt to defend their rights.

I took an opportunity of making known to Naoum Pasha the language I had held to both Maronites and Druses, and his Excellency appeared to concur with my views on the subject.

Skender Bey Zueni, the Political Director, whose functions were suspended in consequence of anonymous charges of corruption which appeared in the Egyptian newspapers, in letters, and placards, is still in the same position awaiting the investigation which Naoum Pasha assured me, as reported in my despatch No. 37 of the 30th June last, would be instituted if he was reappointed. His Excellency told me that the inquiry would take place as soon as he had received instructions for his guidance as to the procedure to be observed in the investigation of charges of an anonymous character. He was disposed to refer the matter to the Administrative Council, and I urged him to avoid unnecessary procrastination, which was inadvisable in his own interests and decidedly unfair towards Skender Bey, an officer of thirty years' service, who has now been suspended for five months without any person having come forward to substantiate the anonymous accusations, and who has unceasingly demanded the inquiry.

When travelling among the Druses, I observed that a large majority belonging to the Jumblat party would have preferred a change of Governor in the hope that their Chief, Nessib Bey, would return to power as Kaïmakam in the place of the present holder of the office, Emir Mustapha Raslan. They now fear that the influence of the Emir over Naoum Pasha may become more detrimental than ever to their interests, as it is a well known fact that he has never lost an opportunity during his Kaïmakamship to lower his rival in the estimation of the Governor-General, and to persecute all those who remain open adherents to the Jumblat party.

Since the organization of the Lebanon Administration, the Druse Kaïmakams have been oftener selected from the Raslan family owing to the fact that they

belonged to the Jumblat party and enjoyed as Emirs a more neutral position among the Druses. The present man has, however, severed himself from the Jumblats and sought to form a party of his own, but the power he has thus acquired is temporary and mainly dependent on the office he holds under the Government.

From personal observation, I should estimate Nessib Bey Jumblats' party at about 80 per cent. of the Druses. Their devotion to the old feudal family is very remarkable, and it has been put to a severe test during the past five years. I am sure that the Governor-General would command the respect and loyalty of all the Druses if he assumed a more neutral attitude in dealing with the two parties, and kept a firmer hand on his present Kaïmakam.

Naoum Pasha is now on a tour in the mountain passing through the Kaïmakamliks of Zahlé and Meth. He will return by the Kesrawan and visit the Maronite Patriarch at his summer residence Aramoun.

His Excellency informed me at Beit-Eddin that he had decided to give up residing in Beirout during the winter season, and had hired a house at Haddeth, a village situated close to the winter Serai of Baabda and about half-an-hour's drive from Beirout. This is a wise move, and will be hailed with approval by the Lebanese. Having no official status in the vilayet, the Governor-General's residence in Beirout gave rise occasionally to misunderstandings with the Vali, especially in questions of official etiquette and, in fact, from every point of view, it is preferable in the interests of the Lebanon Government and people that the Governor-General should reside in his own district.

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. DRUMMOND HAY.

No. 146.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received September 27.*)

(No. 648.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, September 23, 1897.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 630 of the 16th instant, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Damascus, reporting further disturbances in the Hauran.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 146.

Consul Richards to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 48.)
Sir, *Damascus, September 10, 1897.*

WITH reference to my previous despatch No. 47 of the 6th instant, I have the honour to inform your Excellency that another conflict has taken place in the Lejah between the Imperial troops and a united body of Hauranese and Bedouin. The fighting occurred on the 6th and 7th instant at a place known as Kiratta near Ain Hamer, the scene of the former conflict.

Unfortunately, I have no information, so far, as to the number of killed and wounded on either side, nor, indeed, have any details come to hand up to the present moment. I should have seen the Vali on the subject, but a passing indisposition has prevented my doing so.

I have also to report that the well-known Chief Akkal (properly A'kil, 'a wise man') of the Hauran Druses, Sheikh Hassan-el-Hajari, accompanied by three other Druse Notables, was quite recently on his way back to the Jebel Druse from Broussa, where he had been in exile, when he was suddenly taken ill and died in the village of Rehaileh some seven hours to the north of Damascus.

It appears that these persons, who with their families and attendants and other compatriots of minor importance, numbered in all some fifty persons, had escaped from Broussa, to which place they were exiled about two years ago.

I am given to understand that the Druses and the Haurauese have presented a Petition, made out in triplicate, one copy addressed to the Vali, a second to the

Mushir, and a third to the Sublime Porte, in which they beg to be exempted from military service and from the payment of the tithe on the "farming" system as it is at present collected throughout the province.

They beg that the old system, according to which a lump sum was paid by the whole of the district in lieu of all claims, may be continued in the future. It would appear that the Vali is disposed to take a favourable view of this Petition, whereas the Mushir is inclined to have recourse to the most extreme measures rather than yield to demands which, in his opinion, affect the honour of the Government.

I gather that the Druses of the Hauran are not decided as yet whether or not to take part with the Hauranese and Bedouin in their conflict with the Imperial troops, so that concessions made now by the authorities in the matter of conscription and the tithes would avert the possibility of a conflict which would undoubtedly be of a most serious nature, for the accession of the Druses to the ranks of the Hauranese and Bedouin is all that is needed to turn the scale in their favour; for even now it is reported, though I cannot say with what amount of truth, that the Mushir has applied for reinforcements.

I am informed that three companies of infantry with four senior officers left this place by train for Sheikh Meskin on the 8th instant, while a troop of cavalry is reported to have left for the same destination on the following day.

I should state in conclusion that the name of the Christian village referred to in my previous despatch as having been attacked by a band of Hauranese and Bedouin, is Rhabah, not Inkhill, as therein stated.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. S. RICHARDS.

No. 147.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received September 27.)

(No. 649.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, September 23, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Kharput, reporting the release of four Armenian prisoners in that town. I am communicating to the Armenian Patriarch Mr. Fontana's suggestion as to the steps to be taken for the liberation of the prisoners who were sentenced to death.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 147.

Vice-Consul Fontana to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 41.)
Sir, *Kharput, September 7, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to report to your Excellency the release from prison of the men Daniel Ekmekjian, Krikor Misirlian, and Bogos Njararian, who were alluded to in my despatch No. 17, dated the 22nd March last, as having been condemned some seven years ago to fifteen years' penal servitude in consequence of the murder of a policeman at Arabkir.

A priest named Der Hoosig, upon whom sentence of death was passed last autumn in connection with the disturbances in the said town, was released some time ago and has since proceeded, I am told, to Constantinople. His fellow-prisoners, whose sentence to death was commuted to detention in a fortified town "until they should become reformed characters," are still in gaol here, as they petitioned, the Vali informs me, against their removal from Kharput. These Armenians have thus already passed two years in prison, and Raouf Bey is of opinion that the Patriarchate might, very possibly, now obtain their pardon.

I have, &c.
(Signed) RAPHAEL A. FONTANA.

No. 148.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received September 27.)

(No. 651.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, September 23, 1897.*

ON receipt of Mr. Hardinge's despatch to your Lordship No. 108 of the 22nd August, respecting the recent incursion of Armenian bands from Persian into Turkish territory, I instructed Mr. Block to communicate the substance of the despatch to the Grand Vizier and the Foreign Minister in order to show the efforts made by Her Majesty's Representative at Tehran to prevent the violation of the Turkish frontier and the disturbance of order.

The Grand Vizier, in conversation with Mr. Block, expressed his gratitude for the advice given at Tehran, but added he had little confidence in Persian promises. His Highness communicated confidentially to Mr. Block a copy of the Report of a Mixed Commission sent to inquire into the circumstances of the raid. This Report, a translation of which I have the honour to inclose, confirms the reports of outrages committed by the invading bands and imputes negligence to the Persian authorities.

Mr. Block at the same time asked the Grand Vizier whether he had received any information as to an alleged raid by Kurds upon the villages in the plain of Salmas reported in Mr. Hardinge's telegram No. 57 of the 8th September, but his Highness said he knew nothing of the matter.

I am sending a copy of this despatch to Her Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 148.

Report of Turkish Commission on the Raids of Armenians over the Turkish Frontier.

(Translation.)

IT having been reported that an armed band of Armenian vagabonds made, on the night of Friday, the 25th July (o. s.), 1313, a sudden attack on a camp known as Khané Sor, in the Caza of Elbak, being the former summer camp of the Shekiah tribe, where the head of the tribe and Lieutenant-Colonel of the 20th Hamidieh Regiment, Sherif Bey, was in camp with a portion of the tribe, and committed various outrages; and also that a number of Persian troops accompanied them. The Commandant of Bash Kalé communicated this to the Acting Vali and Commandant of Van.

In reply, instructions were sent to the effect that a Commission of Inquiry should proceed to the spot, composed of Lieutenant-Colonel Izzet, commanding the 56th Hamidieh Regiment, the Assistant Procureur Mehmed Tefik Bey, a civil functionary, an Armenian member, and the Persian Vice-Consul. By the Acting Mutessarif of Hekkiari the following were added; Sefid Bey, President of the Municipality the Armenian Member of Council Kevork Effendi. This Commission, including the Vice-Consul, proceeded to Khané Sor, the scene of the outrage.

After a close and impartial inquiry, it was ascertained that, as reported by the military authorities, the Armenians made the attack at half-an-hour's distance from the frontier, east of Khané Sor, at a spot visible by the Persian troops, and, attacking the tents, killed 160 men, women, and children, and wounded 70 persons. They were then repulsed by the tribe, and pursued as far as the frontier.

Among the corpses of the Armenians who fell was one who had been circumcized, and wore the uniform of the Persian troops known as "serbaz," also carrying a "Sozini" rifle such as these use; another circumcized person's corpse was found with several wounds, both at about 400 metres from the tent. The beards, hands, and feet of these were dyed in the Persian fashion, and their heads were shaven in the Persian way. They were, therefore, clearly Persians.

However, when the Kurds pursued the vagabonds right up to the army already mentioned, which was at a place on the Persian side called Tay Desht, half-an-hour away from Khané Sor, where the assault took place, having come on pretence of arresting Mehmed Pasha, the Chief of the Persian Shekiak, the soldiers united with the Armenian "fédars" and urged them to commit outrages, and the tribe witnessed the reception of the vagabonds by the soldiers, who attacked the Mussulman tribe, and behaved so as to terrify these latter.

They thereupon sent a message to the Commander of the troops to the effect that as, in virtue of the frontier Treaty, Ottoman troops were not allowed to cross the frontier, the Persian troops should either assist them, or repulse the rebels when they returned to Persia.

A Persian officer with fifty cavalry soldiers then rode up to one tribe which was at war, and addressing Mehemed Effendi, third Captain of the 20th Hamidieh Regiment, said that the Persian troops would not allow the Armenian rebels to escape, and in the event of the slightest negligence on the part of the Persian troops on their return to Persia, then this would mean that the incursion had taken place with the assistance of the Persians.

Upon the faith of this assertion, the tribe, leaving their line of retreat, which was on the Persian side, took another route. The rebels then fled from the Persian army's view, and returned as they pleased to the plain of Selmas, their hiding-place. The Persian troops were encamped on their line of retreat. It is reported by the tribe that, thanks to God, all the rebels were destroyed.

After the departure of these rebels, the Persian army, abandoning the question of Mehmed Pasha, retreated by night towards Selmas, and as two Persian bodies were found amongst those of the Armenians resembling in every particular of dress those of the remainder of the Persians, it is clear that the inroad of the Armenians must have taken place with the assistance of the Persians, and that troops were with them. Moreover, the Persian Vice-Consul, Ismail Khan, confirms the fact that the two bodies were those of Persians, and that the uniform and Sezini rifle were those of the Persian army, but added that he could not speak to the other proofs, not having been present during the attack.

The atrocities perpetrated on Mussulmans by these rebels during their attack are absolutely unprecedented. Thus, not satisfied with killing Mussulman women, they cut open the stomachs of children, and cut off their breasts. From the valise of an Armenian killed in the disturbance were taken two breast nipples, which were fastened with needles so that they should not be crushed, and caused universal grief when brought to light. After the pure souls of the martyred believers had risen to their home on high, the rebels, not contented with the pain they had caused with bullet and sword to those blood-polluted corpses, committed various acts of barbarity which it is impossible to describe. Thus, after the death of the Guybashi Abd-ur-Rahman, the skin and bone by his two ears from his skull to his chin was cut off and taken away, and one of his eyes was gouged out and carried off. Moreover, his skull was pierced and the brain poured out on the ground, while every part of his body was cut up in pieces as butchers cut up sheeps' flesh for sale. Sheikh Nom-ed-Din Effendi, one of the saints who forsook house and home for their faith and country, and devote all their efforts to the acquisition of wisdom, was hacked to pieces with six of his disciples. Sheikh Kusnin Effendi's teeth were pulled out, and his bowels torn from his stomach. Children, male and female, of from one to two years of age, were also the victims of these barbarities. Some were left with hands and feet cut off; some were mutilated by having their organs of generation cut off; others were left alive, but their noses and ears cut off, but perished afterwards. In the case of some pregnant women abortion was caused by tumbling on them; in other cases the fœtus was torn from the womb and barbarously mutilated. All this is proved by trustworthy evidence and an individual examination of each body. As to the proofs establishing the attack, a number of imitation Mauser rifles, some with one chamber, others with five, were found on the bodies of rebels killed during the repulse, as also certain bone whistles used for giving signals for rallying the pack together, with a piece of gold on each bearing what resembled arms with an Armenian inscription, and supposed to be the badge of the Fedaïs; also a number of water-skins and Mauser cartridges.

The above is the result of our inquiries.

Lieutenant-Colonel Commanding 56th Hamidieh Cavalry,
(L.S.) (Signed) MEHEMET IZZET-BIN-ALI.
Assistant Procureur of Hekkiari,
(Signed) MEHEMED TEFFIK.
President of the Municipality,
(Signed) MEHEMET SAID.
Member of Council of Administration,
(Signed) KEVORK.

July 31 (o. s.), 1313.

No. 148*.

Consul-General Wood to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received October 4.)

(No. 13.)
My Lord, *Tabreez, September 9, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit, for your Lordship's information, the copy of a despatch I have this day addressed Her Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran on the subject of a renewed* attack by Turkish Kurds upon villages on Persian territory.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CECIL G. WOOD.

Inclosure in No. 148*.

Consul-General Wood to Mr. C. Hardinge.

(No. 32.)
Sir, *Tabreez, September 9, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to report, on information gathered from reliable sources, that a further attack† has been made by Turkish Kurds against villages on Persian territory.

These attacks have been directed against villages inhabited by Mussulman as well as those tenanted by Christians.

News received later in the day yesterday confirmed the short report I had forwarded to you in the morning, and shows that the village of Khosrova, a place which belongs to the French missionaries, had been also included in the attempts made by the Kurds.

It was approached for the second‡ time, at early morning, by a party of some 200 Kurds, whose intention was evidently to lift the flocks and herds belonging to its inhabitants, and which are kept in open pens in the outskirts of the village.

Some twenty mounted Kurds put the herds in motion, whilst some thirty of their companions kept at a short distance from the scene of the operation, the main body holding itself in reserve with the intention of falling upon the villagers, who would not fail to make an attempt to recover their property.

This the villagers did, delivering their fire at the twenty horsemen at long range, and succeeding at last in obliging the Kurds, who lost two men and a horse, to retire precipitately.

Among the other villages attacked was one belonging to a well-known native banker, Hadjee Baghir Saraff of Tabreez, and 800 sheep were carried away.

A body of Persian horse coming to the help of the various villages the Kurds retreated, but after an obstinate encounter, in which many are said to have fallen on both sides, many heads being brought back by the Persians.

From all accounts, it seems that Mehmet Agha Shakakh, the Chief of the Shakakh tribe, and his son Ali Agha, whose attitude§ against their authorities had called the Persian troops upon them, have had a hand in these last raids.

The state of excitement in the plain of Salmas is, according to reports, intense. Fortunately, as the villages of Mussulmans have been included in the Kurdish raids, both Mussulmans and Christians are united against the common enemy. Arms, or the wherewith to purchase them, have been freely distributed to the inhabitants by the Mussulman proprietors of Christian villages, as well as to those of their own creed, and it is to be hoped that whilst pressure is being put upon the Turkish Government to restrain their lawless subjects, the inhabitants of the plain of Salmas encouraged by their successful repulse of the invaders will hold their own, especially if they are supported by the Zaffir Essultaneh and the forces at his disposal.

* See Mr. Wood's despatch to Legation No. 6 of 16th August, inclosed in Mr. Wood's No. 5, 1897.—C. G. W.

† See Mr. Wood's No. 6 of August 16, 1897.

‡ The first attack took place on the night of the 3rd instant.—C. G. W.

§ See Mr. Wood's No. 4 of August 14, 1897. Communicated to Foreign Office in No. 3 of August 14, 1897.—C. G. W.

Great fears are entertained of a descent by the Sheikh Sadik, the son of Sheikh Abeidullah,* the invader in the past of Urumia, and who is reported to be only awaiting a hint from Constantinople to take reprisals upon the Christians on the border, when the village of Mavara in Tergawar, inhabited by Nestorians who have hitherto kept the Kurds in check, will receive his first attentions.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CECIL G. WOOD.

* See allusion to this personage in Mr. Wood's No. 1 of June 9, 1897.—G. G. W.

The foregoing report having been read over aloud, Ismail Khan, the Persian Vice-Consul, having been requested to sign it, stated that its contents were in complete harmony with the truth, but that if he were to affix his seal to it the Persians would kill him and his family, and confiscate his goods.

He thereupon begged to be excused.

This having taken place in the presence of the Mudir of Bir, Pertel Effendi, of Major Hassan Agha, a Shemshiki Chief, of Yussuf Effendi, the second clerk of the 20th Hamidieh Regiment, and of Mahomet Effendi, Yugbashi, is separately attested hereunder.

Lieutenant-Colonel Commanding 56th Hamidieh Cavalry,
(Signed) MEHEMET IZZET-BIN-ALI.
Assistant Procureur of Hekkiari,
(Signed) MEHEMED TEFFIK.
President of the Municipality,
(Signed) MEHEMET SAÏD.
Member of Council of Administration,
(Signed) KEVORK.

July 31 (o. s.), 1313.

No. 149.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received October* 4.)

(No. 652. Confidential.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, September* 25, 1897.

WITH reference to my telegram No. 515 of the 10th August, I have the honour to report that the negotiations which have been so long pending between the Sultan and the Heads of the Armenian community have at length resulted in the presentation of an Address to His Imperial Majesty by the members of the Grand Ecclesiastical and Civil Council.

This Address, of which a copy is inclosed, is couched in submissive terms. It expresses gratitude for the favour shown to the Patriarch on the occasion of the anniversary of His Imperial Majesty's accession, condemns the outrages committed by the Armenian revolutionists, and asks for a favourable reception for the requests submitted by the Patriarch. Finally he declares that the loyal Armenians recognize His Imperial Majesty as their only support and refuge in what regards their well-being and their prosperity.

The Armenian Patriarch, who called upon me a few days ago, said that this last passage had been inserted in order to meet the Sultan's demand that the Armenians should henceforth abstain from appealing for protection to the foreign Embassies.

With regard to his Beatitude's requests, of which a list was given in my despatch No. 44 of the 17th January, he said that they still remained unfulfilled notwithstanding the promises repeatedly given.

He expressed much uneasiness as to the future, although for the moment the relations between the Patriarchate and the Porte were less strained than they had been for some time past.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 149.

Address to His Majesty the Sultan.

(Traduction.)

NOUS Soussignés, membres du Grand Conseil Ecclésiastique et Civil du Patriarcat Arménien, avons l'honneur de déposer aux pieds du trône de votre Majesté Impériale, notre auguste bienfaiteur et Souverain, la présente Adresse de remercîement et vive gratitude.

Sa Béatitude le Patriarche Arménien s'étant rendu à votre Palais Impérial pour présenter à votre Majesté l'hommage de ses respectueuses félicitations et de ses sentiments de loyauté, à l'occasion solennelle de l'anniversaire de son bienheureux avènement au trône, a eu l'insigne honneur d'être admis en la présence de votre Majesté qui a daigné

lui conférer le Grand Cordon de son illustre Ordre Impérial de l'Osmanié, en l'assurant de sa haute sollicitude et de sa pleine confiance envers les Arméniens, ses sujets fidèles, et en lui ordonnant en même temps de transmettre à notre nation ses précieuses salutations Impériales et de lui déclarer qu'elle sera l'objet de ses hautes faveurs, et qu'on ne saurait attribuer à la généralité de ce peuple les actes et mouvements répréhensibles de quelques particuliers qui, à l'instar de ce qui se passe chez tous les peuples, se sont laissés surprendre par des séductions fallacieuses.

Le Patriarche nous a fait ces communications éminemment précieuses qui émanent de la grande bonté et des sentiments affables et bienveillants de votre Majesté Impériale et qui nous ont rempli de joie.

Sire,

Vos fidèles sujets Arméniens, qui sont heureux et fiers de vous voir confirmer si gracieusement leur dévouement sincère envers votre Empire et les services loyaux qu'ils lui ont rendus, condamnent sévèrement tous ceux qui osent préparer et commettre les actes maudits qui outragent l'humanité et blessent leurs sentiments de fidélité. Ils déclarent que le Patriarcat ne se fera pas faute, dans les limites de ses moyens et de son pouvoir, d'aider et de faciliter les mesures justes qui seront prises par les autorités en vue d'empêcher le renouvellement d'incidents de nature à troubler l'ordre et la tranquillité publique. Ils attendent uniquement de la faveur et de la sollicitude, si nécessaires pour eux, de votre Majesté Impériale, leur gracieux et puissant Maître, un accueil favorable aux requêtes et demandes du Patriarcat, ainsi que son appui et sa haute protection souveraine en leur faveur. Ils déclarent également que les sujets loyaux Arméniens ne reconnaissent en ce qui regarde leur bien-être et leur prospérité que votre Majesté Impériale comme leur soutien et leur recours.

En prenant la liberté de porter ce qui précède à la haute connaissance de votre Majesté Impériale nous considérons comme un devoir sacré d'adresser des vœux fervents au Ciel pour la prolongation de ses jours précieux, pour son bonheur et sa gloire, et de lui exprimer, à cette même occasion, nos remerciements et notre reconnaissance.

Nous sommes, Sire, avec le plus profond respect, de votre Majesté Impériale les très humbles et très dévoués serviteurs et sujets.

(Suivent les signatures des Membres du Grand Conseil Ecclésiastique et Civil.)

Constantinople, le 27 Août (8 Septembre), 1897.

No. 150.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received October 4.*)

(No. 653.)

Constantinople, September 24, 1897.

My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Adana, inclosing an extract from a report by the Rev. J. C. Martin, a missionary at Hadjin, on the condition of that district.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 150.

Major Massy to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 84.)

Adana, September 8, 1897.

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith a portion of the Rev. J. C. Martin's report on Hadjin to his Mission, in which I have marked, in the margin, certain passages which cannot fail to be of interest, in their political aspect, in showing the present generally improved, and still improving, condition of that district.

I am sure that your Excellency will agree with me in considering Hadjin, owing to its almost exclusively Christian population, its inaccessible situation amidst rugged mountains, and owing to its close proximity to Zeitoun, to be one of the most important

centres in Asia Minor, after Zeitoun, with reference to the Armenian question. It was visited by influential revolutionary emissaries prior to the last Zeitoun outbreak, and in any future Armenian rising great efforts would be made, doubtless, to gain this place over to open revolt. It is, therefore, of importance that this district should be in a state of increasing prosperity, thereby lessening any temptation to join in such folly, and I am sure, therefore, that your Excellency will peruse with pleasure the above-marked portions of Mr. Martin's unprejudiced report.

I have, &c.
(Signed) P. H. H. MASSY.

Inclosure 2 in No. 150.

Extracts from Annual Report, 1896-97.

Hadjin Station.

COMPARED with the one preceding it, last year was a year of peace and prosperity. The demons of anarchy and destruction which were let loose upon a defenceless people have retired to their dens, glutted and satisfied for a season at least. The remnant which survived the onslaught, as is natural, shows a disposition to renew the struggle for existence, but to many the struggle is one against great odds, and holds forth no bright hope or inspiration to sustain them in it. They feel that the recent destruction, which, like an immense millstone, fell upon them and crushed a large part of their nation, although removed, has only been suspended above their heads, and may at any moment descend again to grind out whatever life has been left. They live continually in the shadow of an impending calamity.

The restoration of peace and order, however, has, in a measure, inspired confidence. Trade is reviving, labouring men and artisans go to villages and other towns for employment; travel is about as safe as it was at any time previous to the recent massacres; and Moslem and Christian again live together on very much the same terms as of yore.

For a season taxes were collected with extreme rigour; influential men, and especially those known to have money, were blackmailed or committed to prison. At the same time, rumours of proposed attacks on Hadjin were frequent, but all this has given place to a somewhat better order of things. The people are extremely destitute it is true; and many have suffered for lack of proper food and clothing, but there is good prospect that the need in this direction will, in the near future, be reduced to a minimum. We feel deeply grateful to all who have sent us aid in money or clothing for the needy, thus enabling us to save hundreds from perishing, and to help these to make a renewed effort towards providing for themselves.

Relief.

Since last report, 75,000 Turkish liras have been given for relief in Hadjin and thirteen surrounding villages. Of this, 500 liras were granted for the purpose of purchasing seed-grain, oxen, and necessary implements for farmers in Shar, Roomloo, and Yerebakan. From this also a limited number of artisans were aided to enable them to buy stock with which to make a fresh start. There were many urgent requests for pack-horses and donkeys, but as we were obliged to use a part of this grant for purchasing food, we were able to help only a very few in this direction. From the first, that is, for the past eighteen months, £T. 4,100 have been distributed in this district. The number receiving aid varied in different months from 200 to 4,000. A large quantity of material for bedding and clothing was sent from England a few months ago, not all of which has yet been distributed. Were it not for the assistance thus rendered hundreds would, doubtless, have perished of hunger and cold, while many more would be eking out a wretched existence by begging or other discreditable methods. As it is, although the people are wretchedly poor, and many of them almost naked, especially in the villages, yet most of them have means whereby they can make a living if only they exert themselves.

Crops so far give good promise of being better than an average, whilst trade and other occupations are opening up to a normal degree.

By far the greater part of the relief was given on the condition of an equivalent being rendered in work. The amount available for aid was in this way increased, and at the same

three works that will be of permanent benefit to the community—such as water-courses, fountains, roads, buildings, &c.—were constructed.

In addition to the sum already mentioned, through the efforts and representations of Major Mussy, the energetic British Consul in Mersina, who also secured for us the grant referred to for agricultural purposes, a sum of £T. 500 was given in order to start some permanent industry in Hadjin. This has always been the great need of the place, some means of securing steady employment for the mass of the people. The custom hitherto has been for labourers to work on the plain during winter, and in summer return to Hadjin to pass several months of the year unemployed. This state of things has been both pauperizing and demoralizing in its effects. Three months ago we began the weaving of "adaja" cloth—a native gingham—and at present we have fifteen looms running. A first requisite for the work is a suitable building, and this is now nearing completion. We have good reason to believe that this industry will, in the near future, develop to such proportions as to give constant employment to several hundred persons. In its relation to the work with which we are more immediately concerned, the direct and indirect results of such an enterprise, in the event of its ultimate success, cannot be otherwise than beneficial and stimulating.

Education.

During the year we have had 950 pupils under instruction within the entire field, 600 of these being in Hadjin, an increase for Hadjin of over 200 pupils since last year. (For girls' schools see Miss Bates' report). The Boys' High School had an attendance of eighty-eight pupils, with a staff of four teachers. Five young men completed the course of studies, and to four of these diplomas were given. The closing exercises of the school were witnessed with marked interest by a large assembly of Protestants and Gregorians, as well as by the leading officials of the Government. The Governor being present, took part in examining the pupils, and at the close expressed his appreciation of the thorough work that is being done in our schools.

For several years it had been the custom of the Local Government to make us uncomfortable by repeatedly threatening to close our schools because we did not have formal permission for them. The fact that we did not have such permission was in no sense our fault, for on three different occasions the necessary Petitions and papers were made out and the law conformed to in every respect, but it was only a few months ago, after long waiting much annoyance and expense, that formal permission was granted for all our schools in Hadjin.

* * * * * *

In September, accompanied by Miss Swenson and Dikran Hoja, I visited Fekke, Yerebakan, Baghchejik, Tashjn, Ghariunsay, and Shar. At various points in my tour the courtesy shown towards me by Government officials was in marked contrast to the treatment to which I had been subjected during my previous tour.

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No. 151.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received October 4.)

(No. 656.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, September 25, 1897.*

ON receipt of Mr. Richards' despatch No. 18 of the 10th instant reporting recent disturbances in the Hauran, forwarded to your Lordship in my despatch No. 648 of the 23rd September, I instructed Mr. Block to call the attention of the Grand Vizier unofficially to the serious consequences that might ensue from any undue interference on the part of the Turkish authorities with the inhabitants of the Hauran.

The Grand Vizier stated to Mr. Block, in reply, that the Vali of Damascus had already been informed that, for the coming year, military service would not be exacted from the Druses of the Hauran, the military exemption tax being paid in lieu thereof, and, further, that instructions had been sent to him to return to the old system of levying the tithe in the Hauran.

The Druses, said His Highness, were satisfied with these concessions, and had returned quietly to their homes in the mountains.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

No. 152.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received October 4.)

(No. 657.)
My Lord, *Therapia, September 25, 1897.*

A TELEGRAM sent by Reuter's agent here recently appeared in the English press to the effect that the Sultan had decided to send a Mixed Commission to Anatolia to take measures for the rebuilding of churches, monasteries, and schools of the Armenian Gregorian Church which had suffered during the disturbances of 1895–96.

I have the honour to report that I have learned, from an authentic source, that this statement is incorrect. It appears that the First Secretary of the Sultan mentioned the matter to the Patriarch, but that nothing practical was decided on; nor has anything been done towards satisfying the Patriarch's requests concerning the opening of a subscription for the same purpose, and for the support of the orphans at present on his hands.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

No. 153.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received October 4.)

(No. 658.)
My Lord, *Therapia, September 27, 1897.*

ON the receipt of Mr. Crow's despatches Nos. 18 and 19, which I had the honour to transmit to your Lordship in my despatch No. 495 of the 26th July last, I addressed a *pro-memoriâ* to the Sublime Porte respecting the acts of violence reported by Mr. Crow, and demanding an explanation of the arrest of certain Armenians in the Caza of Aghlat.

I have now the honour to transmit copy of a Notice from the Sublime Porte, dated the 23rd instant, replying to my representations.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 153.

Memorandum.

LE Gouverneur-Général du Vilayet de Bitlis, interpellé à propos des faits mentionnés dans la notice de l'Ambassade de Sa Majesté Britannique relative à la situation dans cette province, télégraphie que vingt et un cavaliers de la tribu de Riza et Suleiman Aghas de Hassanon avaient, il est vrai, enlevé vers le milieu du mois de Juin dernier des bestiaux appartenant aux habitants du village de Zaghog, mais qu'à la suite des poursuites dirigées contre eux par les autorités Impériales une partie des bestiaux volés a été reprise, le chef des dits cavaliers Dirodiro tué et son compagnon blessé.

Les autorités Impériales n'ont aucune connaissance du pillage par les cavaliers d'Ayas Agha d'une caravane de céréales près de Perikhovo (Aklat). Quant à la dévalisation d'une caravane de négociants d'Erzeroum près de Kirss entre Boulanik et Aklat, elles déclarent qu'aucun incident de cette nature ne s'est produit dans ces parages.

Vingt-neuf Arméniens, parmi lesquels deux maîtres d'école des villages de Perkhos et de Reghog qui se faisaient passer pour missionnaires, ont été envoyés au chef-lieu du vilayet et déférés à la justice comme impliqués dans l'agitation Arménienne. Deux d'entre eux se trouvent détenus sous prévention de meurtre et les autres sous inculpation de crimes politiques.

Constantinople, le 23 Septembre, 1897.

No. 154.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received October 4.)

(No. 661.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, September 27, 1897.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 470 of the 12th July, giving the names of the Armenians then in prison at Adana, I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch I have received from Major Massy, forwarding a list of Armenians under detention at the present moment.

A comparison of the present list with the former shows a diminution in the number of Armenians confined from twenty-eight to twelve.

I regret, however, to notice that Garabet Guederelyan and Stepan Arzouyan, whose death sentences were commuted under the terms of the general amnesty to detention in a fortress till such time as their behaviour should warrant their release, are still, in spite of repeated representations, retained in prison.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 154.

Major Massy to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 91.)
Sir, *Adana, September 17, 1897.*

REFERRING to my despatch No. 59 of the 21st June, 1897, forwarding a list of Armenian prisoners in the Adana gaol, and report thereon, and to your Excellency's further inquiries on this subject, I have the honour to forward herewith another list of prisoners in confinement at present, which I believe to be accurate.

I do not hear so many complaints as to the ill-treatment of Christians confined in the Adana prison since your Excellency's representations on this subject, and I am of opinion that the Wali is now observing more justice to the Armenians, in this respect as in many others, since he is aware that his actions are being closely observed and reported upon without partiality or favour.

I have, &c.
(Signed) P. H. H. MASSY.

Inclosure 2 in No. 154.

List of Armenian Political Prisoners.

1. GARABET GUEDERELYAN, of Adana, condemned to death for political reasons, still confined.
2. Stepan Arzouyan, of Adana, condemned to death for political reasons, still confined.
3. Serkis Atmadjian of Kaisetieh, politically accused of having no passport.
4. Avedis Manouchazhian, companion of No. 3.
5. Markar Beziklan, of Adano, accused of being a Hintchagist.
6. Boghos Tighlean, of Chok Merjumen, accused of having in his possession certain papers said to be compromising.
7. Ussep Hatcherian, accused of having given shelter to No. 6.
8 and 9. Ohannes Yeremian and Taliros Ohannessian, condemned to three years' imprisonment for selling powder to the Zeitounlis.
10. Artin Perouchan Sarkission, of Adana, condemned to three years' imprisonment for false evidence given in a political case.
11. Garabet Missirlian, native of Adana, condemned to exile for life for blasphemy.
12. Nicoghos of Hadjin, falsely accused of murder, but not yet tried.

No. 155.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received October 4.)

(No. 664.)
My Lord, *Therapia, September 28, 1897.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 307 of the 4th May, inclosing a despatch from Major Bulman, reporting on the character and antecedents of Halil Bey, Vali of Sivas who was dismissed in consequence of the massacre at Tokat, I have the honour to report that the official Gazette of the 28th September contained the announcement of Halil Bey's appointment as Acting Vali of Broussa.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

No. 156.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received October 4.)

(No. 666.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, September 30, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Bitlis, who writes from Khizan reporting disturbances in Sasun and Mush Plain.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 156.

Vice-Consul Crow to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 23.)
Sir, *Khizan, September 12, 1897.*

I AM informed by the Episcopal Vicar of Mush, Vartan Vartabed, that disturbances have again broken out in Sasun, and that the nomad Kurds of the Bahiranli and Badilianli tribes have plundered the villages of Shenig, Semal, and Gueliegüzan, ruining their fields and carrying off the wheat from their threshing floors and the animals from their houses.

Many families have been robbed of all they possessed, and twenty-five women and children made their way to Mush on the 23rd ultimo to beg for bread, under the escort of a zaptieh, as communication was interrupted by the Kurds.

From the same source I learn that the villages of Rouo, Sichavi, Ahjan, Alijan, Arinzaank, Hasskeui, Nurshen, Arter, and Tseronk, all in the Mush Plain and the neighbourhood, were plundered on the 17th 18th, 19th, and 20th ultimo by Kurds of the Jebranli, Suidanli, Bahiranli, and Balahanli tribes, and by Circassians, who carried off 785 sheep and thirty-eight oxen and burnt much wheat and hay. An Armenian woman named Sunam, from the village of Tseronk, was murdered by the Kurds near Soluk on the plain as she was returning from Mush, on the 20th ultimo.

I have brought this information to the notice of the Vali, and his Excellency is in communication with the Mutessarif of Mush on the subject.

I have, &c.
(Signed) FRANCIS EDWARD CROW.

No. 157.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received October 4.)

(No. 669.)
My Lord, *Therapia, September 30, 1897.*

I HAD the honour to forward to your Lordship, in my despatch No. 603 of the 7th instant, a copy of a Memorandum which I had caused to be communicated to the Grand Vizier, calling attention to the disorderly condition of the Kurdish vilayets, with

special reference to the friction between Shemshi Pasha, Acting Vali of Van, and Zekki Pasha, the Military Commandant at Erzingian.

Mr. Block learns that the Memorandum was duly read by the Council of Ministers, who had received very similar information from the disturbed provinces, and agreed in deploring the conflict between the civil and military authorities. But, as regards the remedy to be applied, the official view seems to be that, as Shemsi Pasha and Zekki Pasha cannot be brought to agree, the right course will be to get rid of the former, and to replace him by another military Vali, enjoying the Marshal's confidence, and therefore able, without causing jealousy, to take local command of the troops, besides exercising his civil functions.

Shemsi Pasha, as stated in my above-mentioned despatch, has already sent in his resignation, but it has not yet been accepted, and matters will probably be allowed to drift for some time longer.

Zekki Pasha is not likely to be abandoned by his supporters at the Palace. His lenient treatment of the Kurds is said to be fully approved in the highest quarters, and it is thought that the employment of military force against the Kurds in their present discontented state, as advocated by the Vali, would amount to a regular campaign, of doubtful issue, and taxing severely the reduced resources of the country.

Meanwhile the Kurds are taking full advantage of their immunity, as shown in Captain Elliot's reports already forwarded to your Lordship in my despatch No. 626 of the 14th instant.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

No. 158.

Consul-General Wood to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received October 6.)

(No. 14.)
My Lord, *Tabreez, September 18, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith copy of a despatch and its inclosures which I have this day addressed Her Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Teheran, on the subject of the extraordinary doings of the Persian functionaries in the south-west districts of Urumia and Salmas towards the Christian subjects of His Imperial Majesty the Shah, under the pretence of carrying out legitimate orders.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CECIL G. WOOD.

Inclosure 1 in No. 158.

Consul-General Wood to Mr. C. Hardinge.

(No. 33.)
Sir, *Tabreez, September 18, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to forward, for your information, the translation of a Confidential letter, which I have addressed His Highness the Amir Nizam, in a friendly spirit, on the horrible state of things which is reported from various sources as existing in Urumia and Salmas, owing to the manner in which the authorities in those parts are behaving in the carrying out the orders of their superiors.

It seems that some fifteen or eighteen persons belonging to the Armenian revolutionary parties, who had taken part in the late raid upon Turkish territory, and who had subsequently, and when dispersing, been seized and imprisoned by the Amir Nizam's orders, had managed to effect their escape from their place of detention, and had taken refuge in the various Christian villages round about. In searching for these people the Persian soldiery, according to reliable reports, emanating from various people, have been allowed by their authorities to behave in a most brutal manner: forcibly entering houses, from which they removed furniture and valuables of every description, tearing the bangles even off the arms of the women, and without making any distinction between the innocent and such as were culpable of having given shelter to the misguided revolutionists.

The officials on their side, have taken the same lines, in seizing, illtreating, and even torturing all they could lay hands upon, notables, priests, and others, besides, extorting

from one and all, various sums of money which, according to reliable report, has been calculated by the Turkish Consul for Khoi, who is moving between Urumia and Salmas, at over 8,000 tomans!

All arms are being taken away from the inhabitants, *i.e.*, from people who have always been loyal to the Shah's Government, and solely occupied and interested, in their agricultural pursuits, and whose possession of arms was a matter of precaution and defence against marauders and Kurdish raiders.

This is being done by the authorities quite heedless of the fact that they are exposing the lives as well as the belongings of the Shah's Christian subjects to grave danger and destruction, as they cannot but be aware of the fact that they themselves are not in the position to guard or save their people when attacked.

It is publicly stated that the persecution which is now being carried on in the south-west districts has been inaugurated by the Amir Nizam's secret orders, in revenge as it were, of the grant of the "Firman"* to the Russian Consul-General on the occasion of the late riots in Tabreez, allowing of his intervention and open protection of the Armenians, but, I can hardly believe that His Highness would be so foolish as to deliberately cause a state of affairs which might hasten the loss of this province to his Government.

Be all this as it may, a state of affairs† which is described by all reports as horrible, and is even compared by an American Missionary to "hell upon earth," has been added to the general disorder and lawlessness‡ which already existed through the apathy and negligence of the local authorities.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CECIL G. WOOD.

P.S.—I beg to inclose a translation of the reply addressed to me by the Amir Nizam, which has just reached me, and from which it will be observed that sufficiently serious complaints had evidently already reached His Highness from the distracted districts to procure the recall of Prince Zafir Essultaneh, the Governor of Salmas and Khoi, as well as Commander of the Persian troops sent to the south-west districts to *protect* the populations against the invasions of Kurdish raiders, and bring peace and quiet in those parts.

C. G. W.

Inclosure 2 in No. 158.

Consul-General Wood to the Amir Nizam.

(Translation.)
(Confidential.)
Highness, *Tabreez, September 18, 1897.*

OWING to the friendly feelings entertained by me towards your Highness, I think it my duty to inform you that from accounts and reports coming in from Urumia and Salmas, it seems that the actions of the officials in those parts towards the Christian subjects of His Imperial Majesty the Shah have been bringing on a state of affairs which can only be described as horrible.

On the escape, of which your Highness is aware, of some fifteen or eighteen Armenian strangers, whose arrest and imprisonment you had rightly ordered owing to their armed attack upon the territory of a friendly neighbouring Power, your officials, in their search for these people among the different villages, allowed great brutalities to be committed during which the innocent, and those culpable of affording shelter to the escaped prisoners, were punished indiscriminately.

On the pretext of obtaining the expenses of the military employed in this search, furniture and valuables were forcibly taken from the houses of the Armenians and Nestorians, even to the bangles of the women; and beatings and tortures of a terrible description inflicted—one man being thrown out from prison by the officials, after such awful treatment, that he expired before anything could be done to relieve his agony, and his body is said to have borne marks of branding, whilst another is said to have lost his wits from the same causes.

It is also stated that the terrified Notables and priests of some villages, being thrown

* See Consul-General Wood's despatch No. 12 of April 15, 1897.—C. G. W.

† Public Reports: Letter of Mr. Shedd, American Mission to Rev. Wilson, September 11; Père Salomon, of French Mission, to friends in Tabreez, September 12; Bishop Isaac, of French Mission, to Consul-General Wood, September 12, 1897; information received from the Armenian Bishop of Tabreez.—C. G. W.

‡ See Consul-General Wood's despatch No. 26 of August 23; see inclosure in Consul-General Wood's despatch to Foreign Office, No. 9, of August 26, 1897.—C. G. W.

into prison, only obtained their liberty by paying from 10 tomans to 200 tomans, according to their means, and that, in one case, the owner of photographic groups of Armenians supposed to be of the revolutionary parties, paid 130 tomans to be forgiven his possession of these pictures.

The Turkish Consul of Khoi, who is in the districts I have mentioned, estimates that over 8,000 tomans have been illegally and cruelly extracted from the Christian rayahs.

Knowing your Highness' sense of justice, I feel sure that the strictest orders will be sent to your subordinates in Urumia and Salmas, to distinguish between the innocent and guilty, and refrain from using horrible treatment, even towards these last, because giving shelter to people whom you can only consider as political prisoners, is not a crime for which torture and death are allowed in civilized countries.

The heavy sum extorted will also certainly impoverish the inhabitants of your best agricultural districts for many years to come.

The above reports come from people of all nationalities and beliefs, and as they all agree in what they say of the state of affairs in the above-mentioned districts, and show that they are in utter terror, there must be some foundation for them.

On the other hand, I hear that the arms which belong to the peaceful Armenians, and which they have always been allowed to possess in order to repel robbers and Turkish Kurds are being taken away from them. This is a measure which may cost thousands of lives of innocent, laborious, and loyal subjects of the Shah, and, in my opinion, ought not to be continued, unless it has been decided to allow the same ruin and fate to fall upon these people as befel the poor creatures in Armenia, and which made the world cry out with horror and detestation.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CECIL G. WOOD.

Inclosure 3 in No. 158.

The Amir Nizam to Consul-General Wood.

(Translation.) 20 *Rabie Sanie*, 1315 (*September* 18, 1897).

IN reply to your confidential letter, I beg to state that since all the complaints from Salmas and Urumia were against the Zatir-es-Saltaneh, the Valiahd has ordered his deposition from his office and the appointment of Hyder Khan, Ameer Toman, to the Governorship of Urumia and Salmas.

(Signed) Amir NIZAM.

No. 159.

The Marquess of Salisbury to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 203.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, October* 9, 1897.

I HAVE received your Excellency's despatch No. 611 of the 22nd ultimo, transmitting a copy of a despatch from the Acting British Vice-Consul at Bitlis on the condition of that vilayet.

I approve of your having authorized Mr. Crow to visit Sairt to endeavour to recover the money stolen from Yusuf Aman, the Agent of the Armenian Relief Committee.

I am, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 160.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received October* 11.)

(No. 673.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, October* 1, 1897.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 587 of the 2nd ultimo, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Jeddah respecting the disturbed state of the Hedjaz.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 160.

Consul Devey to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 85.)
Sir, *Jeddah, September* 9, 1897.

I REGRET to have to report to your Excellency that the state of affairs does not appear to be mending at all in this neighbourhood. Constant robberies and deeds of violence are committed by Bedouins, and latterly more particularly between Tayif and Meren. On one occasion it is said several soldiers were killed and wounded. A few days ago troops were marched out during the night from Jeddah, as it was said that Bedouins had collected to attempt to raid the town; but no engagement occurred. Bedouins in small troops, however, visit villages quite close to this town, and take by violence all they can lay hands on frequently.

On the 1st instant it was learnt that a "Sambuk" shortly after leaving Koulidah for Jeddah had been plundered of 12,000 dollars, and an attempt was made to recall two "Sambuks" laden with rice, &c., leaving Jeddah for that port. Of the stolen money 70*l.* belonged to the custom-house and 20*l.* to a British subject.

It would seem that the Grand Shereef lately ordered, though not supported by Government authority, that no provisions should be sold to Bedouins in Jeddah; want of water is also adding to their discontent, as their flocks are suffering, and no rain has yet fallen.

I have, &c.
(Signed) G. P. DEVEY.

No. 161.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received October* 11.)

(No. 674.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, October* 1, 1897.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 601 of the 4th ultimo, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Acting Consul-General at Tripoli in Barbary, reporting the arrival at that place of sixty-five prisoners from Tokat.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Enclosure in No. 161.

Acting Consul-General Dickson to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 34.)
Sir, *Tripoli, September* 18, 1897.

IN reply to your Excellency's despatch of the 4th instant, I have the honour to report that sixty-five prisoners from Tokat arrived here on the 10th instant by the Turkish steamer "Taif," which had embarked them at Samsoun. On being landed they were imprisoned in the gaol in the Pasha's Castle here, where they still remain.

I have, &c.
(Signed) A. DICKSON.

No. 162.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received October* 11.)

(No. 675. Confidential.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, October* 1, 1897.

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Jerusalem, informing me of the departure of M. Krouglow, Acting Russian Consul-General, and reporting on his alleged mission to Bagdad.

I have also communicated a copy of Mr. Dickson's despatch to Colonel Loch.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 162.

Consul Dickson to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 17. Confidential.)
Sir, *Jerusalem, September* 21, 1897.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 16 of the 6th April last, in which I reported the departure of the Russian Consul-General, and that M. Krouglow, recently appointed Consul at Bagdad, was acting in his stead, I have now the honour to inform your Excellency that M. Krouglow left Jerusalem on the 14th instant for Russia, where he will remain three months and then proceed to Bagdad.

M. Krouglow is a young man of considerable intelligence and promise, and appears to have discharged his duties here with much satisfaction to the Russian Government. Before coming to Jerusalem he had been for some years at Bagdad as Vice-Consul.

I am informed confidentially that M. Krouglow has been instructed to report, on his arrival at Bagdad, on the much desired scheme of securing for Russia a coaling station in the Persian Gulf, though I have not been able to ascertain whether any particular place, outside Persian territory, has been fixed upon. Still, it appears that the possibility of realizing this long-wished-for project on the part of Russia has not been entirely abandoned.

I have the honour to add that M. Evrienoff, First Secretary to the Russian Consulate-General, is now Acting Russian Consul-General in Jerusalem.

I have, &c.
(Signed) JOHN DICKSON.

No. 163.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received October* 11.)

(No. 677.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, October* 6, 1897.

I HAVE the honour to report that, according to a telegram from Smyrna, dated the 4th instant, the authorities of that place have received orders to collect over 300 horses in the vilayet.

Mr. Cumberbatch adds that premonitory signs of preparation for mobilization of troops are also visible.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

No. 164.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received October* 11.)

(No. 680.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, October* 7, 1897.

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul-General at Beirout, reporting that Egyptian visitors in the Lebanon and at Damascus have been ordered to return to Egypt.

I have sent a copy of this despatch to Her Majesty's Agent and Consul-General at Cairo.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 164.

Consul-General Drummond-Hay to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 50.)
Sir, *Beirout, September* 30, 1897.

I HAVE the honour to inform your Excellency that a considerable number of Egyptians who were at Damascus and in the Lebanon for change of air during the summer months lately received orders from the Local Government to return to Egypt. No reasons were assigned for these measures. The Egyptians were merely informed that a prolonged sojourn in Syria was unnecessary now that the weather had become cooler in their own country.

During an interview with the Vali of Beirout, I endeavoured to obtain some explanations from him on the subject. His Excellency was very guarded in his language, and stated that the measures did not apply to Egyptians in general, but only to certain individuals whose names had been notified by the police.

It is possible that fresh instructions have been recently received of a less severe character, but I think that the original order aimed indiscriminately against all Egyptians passing the summer in the Lebanon and Damascus, amongst whom were several persons of note. An attempt was lately made to prevent the disembarkation of an Egyptian student returning to the Jesuit College of Beirout, and it was only through the remonstrances of the French Consulate-General that he was allowed to land.

In my conversation with the Vali, I reminded him that other students were expected, especially at the American College. His Excellency assured me that they would be allowed to land in perfect freedom.

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. DRUMMOND-HAY.

No. 165.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received October* 11.)

(No. 681.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, October* 7, 1897.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 598 of the 3rd ultimo, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum, reporting that Shakir Pasha has left Erzeroum for Trebizond *en route* for Amasia.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 165.

Consul Graves to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 35.)
Sir, *Erzeroum, September* 24, 1897.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 32 of the 19th ultimo, I have the honour to report that Shakir Pasha and his suite left Erzeroum on the 22nd instant for Trebizond *en route* for Amasia, in the Sivas Vilayet, where he will probably pass the winter.

The shortness of his Excellency's stay at Erzeroum is generally attributed to the fact that, owing to the recent heavy military expenses in this province, it was impossible to find the money for the payment of the salaries of the Mission. The Provinces of Van and Bitlis, where Shakir Pasha's presence, under existing circumstances, might have been thought desirable, and even necessary, were it not thoroughly understood that his so-called Mission of reform and reorganization is an elaborate and costly imposture, offered no attractions in their present condition of insolvency and disorder. Travelling expenses, to the amount of over £ T. 400, were found wherewith to pass the Mission on to Trebizond, on its way to the more favoured Vilayet of Sivas, where salaries and allowances are punctually paid, but even this had to be borrowed from a sum of £ T. 3,000 forwarded from Trebizond to cover pressing military charges.

It is needless to add that no practical result whatever has attended Shakir Pasha's second visit to Erzeroum. I had hoped that his authority as High Commissioner for the execution of Reforms might have enabled him to redress at least one injustice, constituting a flagrant violation of Article 26 of the Charter of the 20th October, 1895, namely, the continued illegal imprisonment of Abdul Kerim Bey and Setrak Effendi, referred to in my despatches Nos. 8*, 11†, and 26‡ of the 12th March, the 9th April, and the 17th June, 1897. But his Excellency admitted to me that, in this matter, he could do no more than make a mild representation to the Palace "without offending certain susceptibilities," and so far nothing has come of these representations, if they were ever made.

On the other hand, it may be pointed out that the £ T. 30,000 or £ T. 40,000 which this Mission must have cost since its inception have been exclusively drawn from the desolated provinces of Anatolia, where they might have been more usefully devoted to the payment of the smaller officials and gendarmerie, in default of which all promises and projects of reform are illusory.

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. W. GRAVES.

No. 166.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received October 11.)

(No. 682.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, October* 7, 1897.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 648 of the 23rd ultimo, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Damascus respecting the relations of the Vali of Syria with the tribes of the Hauran.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 166.

Consul Richards to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 51.)
Sir, *Damascus, September* 28, 1897.

WITH reference to your Excellency's telegram of the 25th instant, for the information contained in which I beg to thank your Excellency, I have the honour to report that the interview of which I made mention in my last despatch as being about to take place between the Vali and twenty-five Hauranese Sheikhs did not so

* Sir P. Currie, No. 210. † Not received. ‡ No. 6.

take place, the former making at the last moment an excuse for not receiving the Chiefs personally. He sent them a message, however, through a certain Omar Bey El A'abid, Major of Gendarmes, to the effect that they should return home and pray for the preservation of the life of the Sultan, and that, should he need their presence on a future occasion, he would send for them.

It would appear that the Vali's reason for avoiding a personal interview with the Sheikhs at this particular juncture was a report which had reached his ears that they intended to inform him that they had no confidence in the Sultan's word with regard to their promised exemption from military service. This explanation would appear plausible enough, more especially as I have every reason to believe that the Sheikhs had the intention which has been attributed to them.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. S. RICHARDS.

No. 167.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received October 11.)

No. 683.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, October* 3, 1897.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 626 of the 14th ultimo, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van, reporting on the general condition of the Van Vilayet.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 167.

Captain Elliot to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 49.)
Sir, *Van, September* 22, 1897.

I HAVE the honour to submit the following report on the actual state of affairs here, a summary of which was telegraphed yesterday.

I do not consider that any general danger to the public security exists at present.

The Armenians seem to feel confidence, though the recent arrests have made them uneasy.

The appearance here in fetters of the Kurds arrested in Ardjisch for the disturbance there, mentioned in my despatch No. 46, has had a good effect.

I believe the active revolutionary bands are completely broken up and dispersed. The measures at length taken by the Persian Government make their position here very hazardous.

Had these measures been taken earlier much trouble would have been averted. It is most desirable that the Persian Government should not be allowed to relax its vigilance on the frontier. The two bands referred to in your Excellency's telegram of the 12th September were small parties escaping from Van to Persia, and not fresh invaders.

One of these, ten in number, were surrounded near Serai; four are now prisoners in Van; the remainder were killed or wounded. The other band of nine that went out by Perigri has escaped.

The Government states that about twelve Armenians have gone to Nordoust to kill Shekir Agha, a celebrated brigand who has made himself most obnoxious to Armenians. He was pardoned a few months ago in the general amnesty which was intended originally for Armenian political prisoners, but was made to include as well every Mahommedan rascal in the country. If these men succeed in their object Shekir will but get his deserts, though in a somewhat irregular manner.

A company from here has been sent after them.

Fifty Armenians have been arrested in Van during the last week. The police profess to have captured a lot of papers on the men taken near Serai that incriminate them.

The arrests were effected with considerable violence and brutality in some instances, and the prisoners were reviled, beaten, and robbed by a Mahommedan mob, among whom were soldiers and police.

I managed to get one man released who buys cattle for the relief work. This man lost £ T. 700 last year, had his house burnt, and one of his children, a boy of 5, died of fright. This year, to gratify a private spite of a Police Commissary, his house was entered and searched in his absence. A villager, who had the misfortune to go to it while the police were there, was shot in the breast and thrown into prison. The man I refer to was two days in prison, and, on my representations, he was released without any explanation, his health impaired by ill-treatment and anxiety, and to find another of his children seriously ill from terror. Three or four years ago his brother died in prison after being tortured, and his family and friends were anticipating a similar fate for him.

I do not, as a rule, consider it desirable to enter into details of all the cases that come to my notice, but the accuracy of the above I can vouch for as well as the man's character. This is by no means an extreme instance.

It is by such treatment that peaceable and inoffensive citizens are converted into desperate outlaws.

Most of the other men arrested are, I have every reason to believe, innocent. There are several wealthy and influential people among them, who must be a source of profit to the police.

There is, however, no doubt that the revolutionists have many sympathizers here, and, indeed, there is little cause to wonder at this. Moreover, merchants and others, who have no desire to mix themselves up in these matters, consent to have their names enrolled in revolutionary Societies to avoid the solicitations and threats they would otherwise be subject to. When the revolutionists come here they are forced, through fear, to conceal and offer them hospitality. The Government, which is incapable of protecting them against the consequences of refusal, regard this as a crime, and seek to punish them accordingly.

The police officer, who displayed so much energy on this occasion, has been promoted from third to second Commissary, and it is reported that a decoration for him has been telegraphed for.

The Government deny this, but if it is the case I must appeal to your Excellency for assistance.

I have urged that the ill-treatment of untried prisoners should be inquired into, and that this man, Husni by name, should be punished if the facts are established.

The Public Prosecutor has given my French colleague and myself assurances to this effect.

Your Excellency may perhaps wonder that these things should occur when Shemsi Pasha, the man of whom the Consuls here have spoken so highly, still remains in office.

The explanation is not difficult.

Shemsi Pasha was the only man to be found who had the courage to resist Zekki's intrigues and attempts to provoke massacre and disorder here. In this he had the hearty support of the Consuls. As a reward he was dismissed and disgraced, but though he was reinstated he has been placed in an untenable position, for he has been deprived of the command of the troops, and is thus powerless to enforce his orders. This, too, is a slur on him as a soldier.

Zekki Pasha has ordered the officer now commanding in his stead not to let him leave Van undisgraced.

Though the amount of attention that has recently been attracted to Van may make it appear to the Mushir that the present time is inopportune for a repetition of last year's events, and that it is sound policy to keep quiet and to dissuade the Kurds from any glaring outrage for the present, yet nothing is clearer than the fact that justice and security of life and property for Christians are not to be expected as long as that man is allowed to exercise the influence he does.

It is not because Shemsi Pasha is an exceptionally able or capable Governor that we feel him to be so necessary here at present.

It is because he is the only man we know who has the courage to resist Zekki.

He now chiefly occupies himself in telegraphing his resignation, and has ceased to take anything but a very passing interest in what goes on.

Had he been supported by his Government all through, I have no doubt but that

these oppressive acts would not have been permitted, and that the condition of the Armenians, especially in Ardjish, would have very considerably improved.

I do not understand the necessity for the large number of troops at present in the vilayet, viz. :—

25 battalions infantry (each 550 strong).
2 regiments cavalry.
1 battery field artillery.
2 batteries mountain artillery.
10 squadrons, each 120 strong, of Hamidieh, armed with Martinis (five of these have recently been supplied with these rifles).

I have, &c.
(Signed) G. S. ELLIOT.

No. 168.

Consul-General Wood to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received October* 13.)

(No. 8.)
My Lord, *Tabreez, September* 26, 1897.

I HAVE the honour to forward, for your Lordship's information, the copy of a despatch and its inclosures which I have this day addressed Her Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran, giving details of the attack upon the village of Var and the doings of the Kurds at Kotur.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CECIL C. WOOD.

Inclosure 1 in No. 168.

Consul-General Wood to Mr. C. Hardinge.

(No. 8.)
Sir, *Tabreez, September* 26, 1897.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 6 of the 16th August, wherein I alluded to the Turkish Kurd attack upon the village of Var, in the neighbourhood of Khoi, and the destruction of its inhabitants. I have now the honour to forward, for your information, the copy of a communication addressed by Mr. Shedd, of the American Mission in Urumia, to a *confrère* in Tabreez, giving details of the doings of the attacking party.

From this account it appears that some sixty Armenian families have been stripped of their belongings, and over sixty-seven Christians as well as seven Mussulmans were killed, and of these last the majority were women and girls.

Among the dead, the Armenian priest being included, were twenty-seven inhabitants of Var (mostly women), Kotur Armenians in Var thirty-nine, seven Mussulmans, and one Turkish Rayah—in all, seventy-four people.

The son of the priest was murdered later on, his body being found in water bearing the signs of disgraceful mutilations.

The remainder of the inhabitants have been obliged to join the Kurds and become Mahommedans.

These things happened on the first outbreak of the reprisals made by the Kurds, and before the Persian Government was able to gather forces in those parts.

The news given by Mr. Shedd of the state of affairs at Kotur confirms the information I had given you by telegram, but the date would show that whatever was done by the Kurds at that place was effected before the Armenian raid.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CECIL G. WOOD.

Inclosure 2 in No. 168.

Substance of a Letter written by Mr. W. A. Shedd.

Khoi, September 14, 1897.

SEVERAL weeks ago Kurds, apparently from both sides of the border, attacked Var (about 1½ "agaj" from Khoi) and sacked the Armenian part of the village, killing all they could. There were forty-three or forty-four houses of Var Armenians, besides seventeen families of Kotur Armenians in Var and one Armenian family from Turkey. These men stripped of all their household goods and cattle and have been forced by fear in most cases to give up their threshing floors to Moslem neighbours to thresh on shares.

The number killed was, as nearly as I can make out, about as follows: Var Armenian, twenty-seven; Kotur Armenians in Var, thirty-nine; Turkish Armenian, one; and Moslems, seven—in all, seventy-four. This number is within four or five of exact facts.

There seems to have been no outrage on women except perhaps in one case, though several of the women, including several Moslem women, were stripped naked.

All the Moslems killed, except one, were women and girls. About a dozen of the Armenians killed were grown men, the rest women and children. Among the dead was the Armenian priest.

The priest's son was also murdered a few days ago. His body was found in the water with his skull crushed, marks of having been strangled and evidence of awful torture in his private parts. For this murder some Moslems were arrested, but have been released.

The Var people are scattered among the Armenians about Khoi. The Kurds suffered nothing in attacking the village of Var, and nothing has been done since to them.

The Armenians in Kotur number 116 souls, and all of them have been forced to join the Kurds so as to become Moslems. None have yet been circumcised, I believe.

I have seen some awful sights, one family of thirteen, consisted of two grown men and eleven children, the mothers, three in number, being all killed.

It is reported that several more Khoi Moslem villages have been cleane dout by the Kurds the night before last, and there is a report that the Armenians have had another fight with the Kurds between Kotur and Van.

No. 169.

Mr. C. Hardinge to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received October 18.)

(No. 125.)

My Lord, *Gulahek, September* 21, 1897.

NEWS recently received from the Turco-Persian frontier shows that a state of unrest prevails in those districts, and there is little doubt that the Armenian and other Christians in the plains of Urumiah and Salmas are now suffering for the murderous attack of their co-religionists upon the Kurdish encampment of Sherif Agha last month.

On the 8th instant, Mr. Wood informed me that an attack had been made by Turkish Kurds upon some villages in the southern part of the plain of Salmas, which was repulsed, however, with the assistance of the inhabitants of Khosrova and of the neighbouring villages, Mussulmans as well as Christians having co-operated to drive off the Kurds.

On the 12th instant, Sir Philip Currie informed me that, according to a statement made by the Sublime Porte, two more bands of Armenian revolutionaries had crossed the frontier at Serai and Bargeri. The Persian Government deny, however, the truth of this statement.

In the meantime, reports coming from all sides show that the Persian officials, on the pretext of arresting escaped Armenian revolutionaries, are ill-treating the Christians in Urumiah, and I shall take an early opportunity of bringing this state of affairs to the knowledge of the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Considerable reinforcements of Persian troops have been sent forward, and a camp has been formed upon the frontier with a view to restraining the action of the Armenians and to resisting any incursions by the Kurds.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CHARLES HARDINGE.

No. 170.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received October 18.)

(No. 684.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, October* 8, 1897.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 682 of the 7th instant, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Damascus respecting the movements of the tribes of the Hauran.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 170.

Consul Richards to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 50.)

Sir, *Damascus, September* 24, 1897.

WITH reference to my previous despatch, No. 49 of the 15th instant, I have the honour to report that, according to reliable information received, a large meeting was recently held at a place called Khulkhuleh, in the north-east of the Lejah, at which were present considerable numbers of Bedoween, Hauranese, and Druses. Conspicuous among the latter were the well-known Sheikhs Abou Tallal, Abou Trudih, and Kultan Azzam, who, as I informed your Excellency in my despatch No. 48 of the 10th instant, though without naming them on that occasion, recently escaped from Broussa, whither they had been exiled, and returned to their native country in company with Sheikh Hassan El Hajari, whose death on his way back I reported in that despatch.

The object of the meeting being the discussion of the terms of the Imperial Iradé exempting the Hauranese and Bedoween from military service, a large majority of those present were of opinion that no credence should be attached to the promises of the Imperial Government unless they were confirmed by "the Powers."

A certain amount of importance attaches to the holding of this meeting, not only on account of the large number of persons who attended it, but also, and more especially, because it proves that the Druses of the Jebel Druse have espoused the cause of the Hauranese and Bedoween, a contingency the possibility of which has for some time been looming threateningly before the eyes of the authorities. Unless the latter succeed without loss of time in permanently conciliating either the Druses or the Hauranese—the Bedoween element is not so much to be dreaded—the outlook presents an aspect of considerable gravity, for there appears to be no doubt that, at present, the three peoples are determined to act together.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. S. RICHARDS.

P.S.—I have just heard that the Vali, having summoned a number of Hauranese Sheikhs to Damascus in order to discuss their grievances, twenty-five of them have arrived in the city.

I shall not fail to report the result of this conference.

W. S. R.

No. 171.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received October 18.)

(No. 687.)

Therapia, October 9, 1897.

My Lord,

YOUR Lordship is already acquainted with the general result of the investigations of the Special Tribunal which was appointed to punish the officials and others found guilty of complicity in the massacre of Tokat.

The figures were given in Major Bulman's despatch No. 15 of the 5th June, transmitted in copy to my despatch No. 417 of the 25th of the same month, and I communicated generally upon the verdicts passed by the Court in my subsequent despatch No. 549 of the 3rd August.

The incidence of these sentences would appear to establish the fact that, although the mob which is employed upon a massacre may be required to furnish a few scapegoats, the actual instigators of the plot may safely rely upon the connivance and protection of a Turkish Court if, indeed, the slaughter has been on a sufficient scale to attract the attention of Europe, and thus to compel the holding of any inquiry whatever.

This impression is confirmed by the fuller details which Major Bulman now enables me to forward to your Lordship. They are contained in a report of the individual cases which came before the Special Tribunal. I likewise inclose a précis of this document for easy reference.

But, miserably inadequate as the sentences were, it is not to be supposed that they were [illegible] regarded. In high quarters they were regarded as erring on the side of excessive severity. The [illegible] as your Lordship knows, have already commuted, and the conduct of Hassan Fehmi Pasha, the President of the Tribunal, in not having altogether ignored the culpability of the Mussulmans of Tokat, has since been punished by his removal from the post of Minister of the Imperial Customs to a lower office on a reduced salary.

I have, &c.

(Signed) CURZON OF KEDLESTON.

Inclosure in No. 171.

Précis of Proceedings of the Tokat Commission, which sat from April 21 to May 27, 1897.

1st Case.—Murder of Calpakchioglou Hadji Ohanness.—The accused were Mikdad, Irfan, and Saatch Ouer. Mikdad, who was evidently guilty of murder, was sentenced to fifteen years' hard labour, and Irfan to five years as his accomplice. There was no evidence against Ouer, who was acquitted. (*Vide* pp. 1, 30, and 33.)

2nd Case.—Murder of Artin and Ahron and wounding of Mihran and plundering.—Ibrahim was sentenced to death, and Mehmet and Alli to six and five years' hard labour respectively, as accomplices in the crime. (*Vide* pp. 2 and 30.)

3rd Case.—Twenty-nine persons were accused of having organized the massacre and excited the people, and some of the above twenty-nine of having murdered Pinnokoglou Kevork and Hamal Tghin.

The evidence in these cases was of a most conflicting character, the witnesses frequently contradicting not only each other but also themselves, and failing entirely to reconcile their two statements. It was shown, however, that two of the men condemned to death (Djevelekoglou Ousein and Alli Bey) confessed that there was a secret order to attack Tokat, a Committee of about twenty men, notables and others, having been formed; and, though this clue was not followed up, suspicion points very strongly to Mahmoud Nazim Pasha, the then Mutessarif of Tokat, who told Djevelekoglou, just before the events took place, that "such things had taken place all over the country. The Government was merciful and would forgive them." He further promised him 10 to 50 lire.

* Inclosure in Major Bulman's No. 20 of the 5th September, 1897.

Osman Bey, who was acquitted, entered the city by firing a bullet on the commissaire, and certainly, on the whole, did not come out of the affair with much credit to himself. Several persons were identified as having had arms in their hands at the time of the massacre, but their defence invariably was that they were only protecting themselves, and some asserted that they were protecting the Armenians.

Major Bulman, in his telegram of the 27th March, stated that there were 500 troops in Tokat at the time of the disturbances, but Moustapha Bey, Cavalry Colonel, apparently was unable to get the men to obey orders and disperse the crowd. There may have been something in his excuse, as numbers of people came into Tokat from the villages and country round the day before, which is only another proof that it was carefully organized. The police do not appear to have been much more efficient than the soldiery, if one may judge by the action of one constable, who stated, under examination, that he did not arrest a certain Gendoglou Ouer, who was armed with an axe, because he "suspected he might do him some harm."

Two Armenian women were eye-witnesses to the murder of Pinnokoglou Kevork by Djevelekoglou Ousein, Sekerdji Hussein, and Hadji, but the former only was found guilty.

A black-bearded Circassian, whose name does not transpire in the *procès-verbaux*, was responsible for the murder of the hamal Ighia, but Donjilon Kirim, who encouraged the assassin to give the hamal a *coup de grâce* by firing a second shot, was [illegible] acquitted.

The decision of the Court was as follows:—

Djevelekoglou Ousein, Sekerdji Hussein, Hadji Ibrahim, Carkiroglou Ibrahim, death.

Hadji Ghalib, Bairam, Batal Moustafa, Sekerdji Hassan, Hadji Hassan, ten years' hard labour.

Sheitan Ahmet, seven years' hard labour.

Ghoussouh Ahmet, two years' hard labour.

The remainder, to the number of nineteen, were acquitted, of whom one only, in the opinion of the Public Prosecutor, was innocent. (*Vide* pp. 1–30.)

4th Case.—Murder of Calpakchioglou Hadji Kirkor, Chalikoglou Kirkor, and Garabet, and wounding of Salomon.—Here there were eleven accused and some of them were further indicted for the murder of Chilfiroglou Hadji Kirkor and Kell Aghop, and for wounding Kurijoglou Ouak Orakim; and Odoujou Redjil was accused of the murder of Dokmedjoglou Biv Ahmet.

In this case three men were condemned to death, five (of whom one was clearly a murderer) to various terms of imprisonment ranging from ten to three years, as accomplices, and six were acquitted, of whom three, according to the Armenian evidence, were implicated in the crime.

One, however, with the help of his relatives, proved an alibi; the others made no attempt to do so. (*Vide* pp. 35–49.)

5th Case.—Murder of Cassardjioglou Hadji Migir.—(The trial was postponed, the accused being indicted for other crimes as well.) (*Vide* pp. 49–51.)

6th Case.—Chelebioglou Moustapha, who, according to the doctor's certificate, was "not insane, but only a little frivolous," was sentenced to three months' imprisonment for stealing a watch. Proceedings might with advantage have been instituted against Ahmed Effendi, in whose house, according to the evidence of his nephew, the accused, and that of the plaintiff, clubs were found on the day of the massacre, and who was alleged to have instigated and organized the crimes which took place in his quarter.

7th Case.—The wounding of Dimitoglou Michael.—The accused, Carshi Ally, was sentenced to one year's imprisonment. He made two attempts to murder his victim but failed. (*Vide* pp. 53 and 54).

8th Case.—Murdering and plundering at the village of Gizeri and at the Monastery.—Sixteen Armenians were murdered, including two priests at the monastery. Twenty-nine persons were accused but only twenty-eight brought up for trial, the most noted murderer of all, Kerkin Hourshid, having made good his escape.

He was, however, condemned to death in company with four others. Kell Alli and Kell Mehmet, two of those sentenced to death, asserted that they were innocent, but had agreed to say they were the murderers on promise of the payment of £T 2 each from fourteen other persons (not named).

No attempt, however, was made to prove this, and they were clearly convicted of murder. Gibin Youssouf was sentenced to fifteen years' hard labour, seventeen to three years' hard labour, including one Kizil Ichabin Ahmet, who was guilty of murder if anyone ever was.

It may be remarked that the sentence of three years' imprisonment was out of all proportion to the crimes of assault, rape, and pillage, of which the majority of them were guilty.

Five were acquitted, one of whom had outraged an Armenian girl, and another was seen stabbing a man with a dagger. (*Vide* pp. 51–74.)

9th Case.—The Mutessarif Mahmoud Nazim Pasha, Deputy Tahsin Aghasi, Captain Husni Effendi, Police Commissaire Nidjate Effendi, Police Commissaire Mountary Effendi, and Police Shefki Effendi, were indicted for not doing their duty properly. The trial lasted two days, and the evidence was not worth much. The accused pleaded that they knew nothing of the coming danger, and each asserted that he had done his duty completely in stopping the disturbance. The five men were accordingly acquitted. (*Vide* pp. 75–88.)

10th Case.—Murder of Arabadji Manouk.—According to the evidence of Manouk's wife this was a gross miscarriage of justice. One of the accused, Tellik, was seen striking his victim; another was heard exhorting his companions to kill him, and two men were hanging about the murdered man's house at the time of the crime with axes and cudgels in their hands.

They pleaded, as usual, absence from the spot, and were acquitted. (*Vide* pp. 88–92.)

11th Case.—Murder of Demirdji Oglou Kirkor and Peirosmian Beiroz.—There were nine prisoners, two were sentenced to fifteen years' hard labour, one* to four years' hard labour, and the fourth acquitted, against whom there was no evidence. (*Vide* pp. 92–97.)

12th Case.—Nine Armenians were killed and one wounded at Biskinjik village: nine men were brought up for trial.

The wounded man Bedros gave evidence of having been struck down and left for dead by Hadji Moustafa and Hamdi, but the President decided that they should be brought up again as the examining magistrate had not committed them for trial.

It was decided to separate the trial of Kior Ahmet from that of the rest.

Three of the others were sentenced to death, and three to three years' hard labour.

This completes the number of accused, but the evidence went to show that two or three other men were guilty of assault. (*Vide* pp. 97–109.)

13th Case.—Eighteen men were accused of the murder of seven Armenians. Besides the usual methods employed, that of hunting the Armenians down, dragging them out of their houses, and butchering them in the streets, about twenty-five men, including a moneggin, broke into the church, and left eight corpses there. Most of these cases were conducted on the most superficial lines, and it will be remarked that the bodies found in the church alone, excluding the murders committed in the village, exceeded in number the alleged victims of those who were charged in this instance.

The result of this trial, which it is difficult to look upon in any other light than that of a farce, was that two men were condemned to death. Both of them were fugitives, and they will presumably be given a good chance of escaping altogether.

A third was condemned to fifteen, and six to three, years' hard labour.

Nine were acquitted, four of whom were distinctly guilty of murder. The man in particular, named Ougoun Mahmoud, who not only had a hand in almost every act of brutality committed on this occasion, was first and foremost in rousing his accomplices to fanaticism by exhorting them "not to look after things," but to "see that they killed men," was acquitted on the evidence of one Turk, who made a general statement to the effect that "he was trying to send off those who wanted to harm the Armenians," as against that of seven or eight Armenians.

N.B.—Kior Ahmet, Hadji Moustafa, and Hamdi (*vide* 12th in this précis) do not appear to have been brought up again, though there is necessarily some confusion of names.

Major Bulman in his telegram of the 30th March, sent from Tokat, says that eighty-nine were killed and thirty-six wounded. The returns of the Commission only mention fifty-six killed and five wounded.

* This man, Chorekji Ouesin, was guilty of the murder of Hadji Migir (*vide* 5th Case in this précis).

No. 172.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received October 18.)

(No. 688.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, October 10, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Aleppo, respecting Armenian agitation in the Suedia district.

I have, &c.

(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 172.

Consul Barnham to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 36.)

Sir, *Aleppo, October 1, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to inform your Excellency that the Armenian villagers near Antioch and Suedia are again under strict "surveillance," owing to information which has reached the authorities that Hunchag agents have returned to the district.

It appears that an Armenian, travelling by the Messageries steamer, landed at Larnaca, where he fell in with two or three young Armenians who gave him to understand that they have been sent out by the Hunchag Society for the purpose of reviving the old agitation at Suedia, and that, with others, they hoped to land on the coast in a few days.

The person in question divulged the news to Hilmi Effendi, the Officer in Command in Suedia, who reported it to the Ferik Ali Moksin Pasha.

The latter, who has been on duty at Aleppo throughout the summer, was glad of an excuse for visiting his district, reported the matter to the Palace as one of great gravity, suggested and obtained authority to visit Antioch and Suedia, where he is now taking steps to surround the villages.

It is evident that in trying to raise a fresh Armenian question at Suedia the Ferik enters into the ideas of the Sultan, for he has promptly been rewarded by the appointment of Aide-de-camp to His Majesty.

The Vali, on the other hand, attaches no importance to the matter.

In connection with this incident, your Excellency will, by reference to my despatch No. 27 of the 27th May, recall the fact that an Armenian priest of Marash named Der Gervont, who took a leading part in the movement of 1895, has been in hiding at Larnaca, and it happens that just when the Ferik left for Antioch, this same priest arrived at Alexandretta in disguise, was arrested, and brought before the Vali, who, in spite of the fact that he is a dangerous conspirator, has contented himself with expelling him again from the country.

I think this shows how wise and conciliatory is the attitude of Raif Pasha towards the Armenians.

I am, however, personally satisfied that there is no reason for anxiety as to a renewal of Armenian agitation. I have just returned from Antioch, where I found that, although some of the Armenian villagers were said to have a leaning towards the Hunchag party, yet everything was tranquil, and the conduct of the authorities in dealing with the matter from its very commencement was the subject of approval.

I have, &c.

(Signed) HENRY D. BARNHAM.

No. 173.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received October 18.)

(No. 690.)

Therapia, October 11, 1897.

My Lord,

WITH reference to my despatch No. 652 of the 23rd September, I have the honour to transmit herewith copy of a letter from the Armenian Patriarch, inclosing a Circular letter which he has addressed to the Armenian clergy and community in consequence of the negotiations which have been carried on for a considerable period between the Sultan on the one part and the Patriarch and Artin Pasha on the other, with the professed object of closing the Armenian question and establishing a *modus vivendi* between the Porte and the Patriarchate.

These negotiations cannot be looked upon as successful from the Armenian point of view, and I learn from the Patriarch that he despairs of obtaining the execution of the promises made by the Sultan. His position is rendered very difficult, as he had, in reliance on these promises, led the Armenians to believe that serious measures would be adopted for the improvement of their condition. He is now blamed by the Armenian community for the non-execution of these measures, and his life has been threatened by the revolutionists—as a traitor to the cause. At the same time the Patriarchate suffers greatly from the diminution of its revenues owing to the Armenian troubles, while the customary grants from the Treasury at Christmas and Easter have been withheld.

The Patriarch also complains that he cannot obtain the necessary authority for the rebuilding of churches, monasteries and schools destroyed during the massacres. He has lately been informed that a Commission will be sent to the provinces to make inquiries on the subject, consisting of three Mussulmans, one Greek, one Armenian Gregorian, and an Armenian Catholic. He hesitates to accept this as he fears that the result will be to close schools that have been irregularly opened, while nothing will be done for the reconstruction of those that were destroyed.

In the meantime advances are being made through indirect channels to the Armenians abroad who have taken part in the agitation for reform. Promises similar to those made to the Patriarchate have been held out to them, and they are invited to return to Turkey and to rely upon the Sultan's good intentions.

I have, &c.

(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 173.

The Armenian Patriarch to Sir P. Currie.

Patriarcat Arménien, Constantinople, le 30 Septembre, 1897.

Excellence,

JE vous remercie pour les deux billets en date du 24 et le dernier en date du 28 Septembre.

Je tiendrai compte des informations pour le sort des infortunés qui se trouvent encore en prison.

Le prêtre Houssik, Vicaire d'Arabgrir, est un des trois ecclésiastiques condamnés à mort qui ont été graciés par un Iradé spécial. (Les deux autres sont le Vartabed Agopos, Prélat de Bitlis, et le prêtre Vahan, Vicaire de Trébizonde.) Tous les trois se trouvent actuellement à Constantinople.

Il faut recourir à un Iradé spécial pour obtenir la liberté définitive des condamnés à mort, qui sont retenus en prison ou en déportation, "jusqu'à ce qu'ils améliorent leur conduite." Leur nombre est de 110, et il faut attendre un moment plus propice.

Je vous envoie la traduction en Français de la lettre Circulaire que j'ai adressée ces derniers jours aux Arméniens de l'Empire Ottoman pour que votre Excellence puisse en former directement une idée exacte.

Je saisis l'occasion pour recommander votre Excellence aux soins du Très-Haut, en même temps que pour témoigner mes sentiments de considération et d'affection.

(Signé) MALACHIA.

Inclosure 2 in No. 173.

Circular Letter addressed to the Armenian Clergy and Community.

NOUS, Malachia, serviteur de Jésus-Christ, et par la grâce de Dieu Archevêque de Constantinople et Patriarche des Arméniens de Turquie, à nos vénérables frères et collaborateurs en Jésus-Christ, aux Évêques, Archimandrites, et prêtres de tous rangs et grades consacrés au service de notre Sainte Église et de notre nation bénie, et à tous nos enfants bien-aimés, fidèles de notre Église Orthodoxe Arménienne, aux hommes et femmes, vieillards et jeunes gens, qui dans la capitale et en province sont appelés aux fonctions nationales diverses, aux assemblées et directions, et qui dans leur vie intérieure s'occupent de travaux spéciaux, à tous enfin, en général, faisons savoir ce qui suit, avec la bénédiction émanée du Seigneur, avec nos vœux fervents et salutations affectueuses

Les graves et délicates fonctions que, par la volonté de la Divine Providence et par la confirmation de notre auguste Souverain et l'élection de notre nation bien-aimée nous avons été obligé d'assumer, dans le but unique de ne point agir contrairement aux sentiments de résignation et d'obéissance exigées par notre vocation ecclésiastique, ainsi que par leur nature intime et leur développement, nous imposent le devoir de vouer toute notre attention aux besoins spirituels de tous les croyants, ainsi qu'à leurs besoins temporels, dans les limites légales que nous trace la mission délicate de nous porter l'intermédiaire entre le Gouvernement et la nation. Aussi sommes-nous obligés de prêcher les vérités indispensables au salut des âmes, d'indiquer en même temps les directions nécessaires au bonheur matériel; et, de même que nous nous empressons d'éloigner notre peuple bien-aimé des erreurs intérieures, de même nous avons le devoir de le mettre en garde contre les fautes extérieures, attendu que tant que nous resterons au pouvoir nous assumons le devoir inaliénable de consacrer nos soins à la généralité de ce peuple.

Nous ne saurions jamais supposer qu'il soit possible d'extirper du cœur le désir de chercher la satisfaction des besoins impérieux, de recourir aux moyens propres à procurer le nécessaire et d'aspirer toujours au mieux dans son impulsion innée. On ne pourrait non plus nier que dans ce monde, où toute chose est liée aux imperfections humaines, aussi bien dans toutes les positions que dans tous les milieux, l'existence intime ou spéciale, nationale ou officielle, ne comporte toujours avec soi des circonstances qui sont loin d'être parfaites, et dont l'amélioration ou le renouvellement se présentent devant tous les gens impartiaux comme un point légal.

C'est sur la base de ces vérités que nous, Arméniens, fidèles sujets du Trône glorieux Ottoman, nous pûmes sans renier les bienfaits précieux de notre foi, de notre langue, et de notre existence nationale, sans relâcher les liens d'amitié que les populations Musulmanes et Arméniennes sont parvenues à l'évidence à sauvegarder mutuellement, sans enfin détruire la confiance réciproque dont les deux populations et chacune de leurs individualités se sont inspirés les unes vis-à-vis les autres, nous pûmes, disons-nous, nous pénétrer du juste et inoffensif désir de jouir de l'instruction et de la science, conformément aux exigences des siècles, ainsi que de nous occuper d'arts et de commerce, pour nous procurer le bien-être et la prospérité, de nous efforcer, en un mot, d'atteindre ces buts sous les auspices des augustes Monarques Ottomans.

Mais dans cette occurrence serait-ce avancer une chose nouvelle et inouïe à nos frères vénérables et enfants bien-aimés, que de devoir vous rappeler la nécessité urgente de respecter la paix et la tranquillité afin d'obtenir un aussi beau résultat?

Quel cœur altéré voudrait donc chercher des désastres pour y trouver une consolation? Quel jardinier laborieux attendrait les vents orageux pour voir se multiplier les fruits de son arbre? Quel sage chef de famille appellerait le dissentiment et le trouble pour assurer le bonheur des siens? Quel homme prévoyant répudierait les moyens calmants pour la guérison de son malade? Si nous désirons de tout cœur et de toute la force de nos sentiments, que chaque individu de ce vaste Empire, et chaque fonctionnaire de son haut Gouvernement, se constituent comme les gardiens de la justice, les champions de la droiture, les instruments du bonheur et des réformes et les collaborateurs de la paix, ne serait-ce pas raisonnable que les autres réclament de nous également les mêmes qualités sur les mêmes principes; et qu'un zèle analogue nous pousse pour notre part à agir de la même manière que celle que nous exigeons des autres?

Grâce à Dieu, l'activité raisonnable, les aptitudes commerciales et industrielles, ainsi que le caractère pacifique et l'attitude correcte de la nation Arménienne, sont des

choses tellement évidentes qu'elles sont confirmées depuis des siècles par les autres peuples et par les observateurs, et qu'elles constituent une vérité proverbiale: nous pouvons dès lors déclarer hautement que tous les jugements portés d'une autre manière à l'égard des Arméniens sont inexacts, et ne sont qu'une pure calomnie.

Nous savons et vous savez également quels sont les odieux événements qui ont provoqué de pareils jugements, et comment les actes blâmables de particuliers ont revêtu un certain caractère, celui de les attribuer à la généralité, caractère que toute notre nation a repoussé maintes fois, soit officiellement, soit publiquement.

Quelques-uns disent que ces particuliers sont sortis de nous, mais nous affirmons avec plus de raison "qu'ils n'étaient pas des nôtres" (1re Ép. Jean l'Évangéliste, ch. i, vers. 19), attendu qu'ils n'ont puisé aucune inspiration des principes propres à notre nation, qu'ils n'ont reçu à cet égard aucune direction des sources sacrées de notre foi et de notre Église, et que leur but ne concorde nullement avec les intérêts primordiaux de notre constitution sociale. Nous ignorons sur quelle terre ont germé ces idées destructrices, dans quelle atmosphère se sont-elles développées, et quel buts étrangers ont-elles servi. Et en vérité de pareilles tendances anarchiques et de pareils faux calculs sont des choses étrangères pour nous, tendances et calculs dont on voudrait, paraît-il, déduire ce principe, qui se traduit par ces mots: "Faisons le mal pour que le bien arrive;" et que l'Apôtre Saint-Paul a jugé lui-même dès l'origine comme un blasphème, et les a proclamés condamnables. (Ép. aux Romains, ch. iii, vers. 8.)

En vérité, mérite condamnation tout acte qui émane uniquement de passions aveugles, sans peser les tendances ou les motifs, ainsi que les circonstances ou les résultats, en sorte qu'il ne saurait être justifié ni par le droit légitime, ni par les conjectures logiques, ni par l'expérience de la sagesse. Il conduit à des circonstances telles qu'il est impossible de fermer les yeux lorsque de tels actes se présentent et de ne pas comprendre ni s'apercevoir que des résultats essentiellement contraires s'ensuivent; et quand on croit s'occuper du remède, on voit que de nouvelles issues s'ouvrent pour en augmenter les maux. Mais le Sage conseille de ne point aimer le danger.

Quelle conscience pourrait admettre que le premier venu puisse jouer au préjudice de son concitoyen, se moquer du malheur de son congénère et de son voisin, voir d'un œil indifférent les passions surgir, les troubles éclater, les maisons dévastées, les affaires compromises, la perte d'hommes et des calamités frappantes surgir? Non! personne ne peut s'arroger le droit de créer des dangers pour autrui, ou ne pas s'apercevoir de ce danger.

La perte de toute estime et considération n'en est pas non plus moindre. Les voies et entreprises propres à dénaturer la marche des choses et à provoquer des jugements défavorables et l'égard des instigateurs et auteurs, inspirent le ressentiment plutôt que la compassion. De pareils gens sont considérés comme les ennemis de l'État, des nations, de la société, et de l'humanité, et ils sont bannis, et condamnés par les personnes sages et civilisées.

Notre sainte religion condamne également de toute la force de ses vérités éternelles, de ses principes évangéliques et suivant ses prédications Apostoliques, des actes de cette nature qui ne tendent qu'à détruire le droit et la justice. Et d'ailleurs, la parole Divine ne se fait-elle pas entendre d'une manière terrible comme suit: "Malédiction à celui qui méprise son père et sa mère! Malédiction à celui qui détourne les droits de la veuve et de l'orphelin! Malédiction à celui qui change les idées saintes de son camarade! Malédiction à celui qui égare l'aveugle dans son chemin! Malédiction à celui qui battrait perfidement son frère! Malédiction à celui qui se laisserait corrompre pour verser le sang du juste! Malédiction à celui qui ne respecterait pas toutes les dispositions des présentes lois!" (Deut., chap. xxvii, vers. 16, &c.)

Notre nation est pieuse et attentive à ses actes; elle est fermement convaincue que quand la religion ordonne par ses saints oracles, quand la sagesse parle avec ses principes sensés, quand la civilisation décide par des arguments basés sur l'expérience, quand le calcul des intérêts et facilités indique la même chose d'une façon persuasive, quand enfin la pensée établit la vérité avec sa force logique, il est nécessaire que les passions qui agissent contre ce qui précède soient dispersées et disparaissent partout où elles se trouveraient, que tous les inconvénients soient écartés, que les éléments de préjudice et de danger soient mis à néant, que l'on reconnisse la valeur de la paix et de la tranquillité, qu'enfin on constate l'avantage en récoltant les fruits. La voie de la légalité seule conduit au bien et à la prospérité; et les points proposés, les besoins exposés, ainsi que les remèdes sollicités dans les limites légales peuvent, seuls, obtenir facilement et avec succès l'accueil désiré.

Notre auguste Souverain nous ayant accordé une audience à l'occasion de l'anniversaire de son glorieux avènement et daigné nous exprimer ses assurances bienveillantes à l'égard de notre nation, a constaté et témoigné publiquement l'importance des services séculaires rendus par la nation Arménienne, fidèle au Trône Ottoman. Sa Majesté a constaté également que les populations Turque et Arménienne ont servi de commun accord les intérêts du pays, qu'elle base sa confiance d'une manière égale sur ces deux peuples en vue d'accroître le progrès, qu'elle ne considère point que l'honneur et la situation de la masse soient altérées par la conduite illégale de quelques individus, qu'elle constate que la réalisation des bienfaits repose sur sa haute sollicitude Impériale aussi bien que sur la loyale coopération du peuple, qu'elle est persuadée qu'il faut rechercher le bonheur du peuple aussi bien que de chaque individu dans la paix, le calme, et dans une inaltérable tranquillité.

Telles sont les belles paroles de bon augure que d'ordre de notre auguste Maître nous nous empressons de vous communiquer par la présente Circulaire; et il est de notre devoir de prier toujours le Tout-Puissant pour la prolongation des jours de Sa Majesté Impériale, pour son succès et sa gloire. Et du moment que le bien ici-bas est le résultat, suivant la Bible, de la loyauté et de la bienfaisance, du moment aussi que nous ne pouvons réaliser ces qualités sans reconnaître et remplir nos devoirs, nous vous prions dès lors, vénérables Frères, de prêcher et d'exhorter en conséquence; nous vous conseillons à vous autres, nos enfants bien aimés, de conserver ardemment les principes que nous avons rappelés conformément aux prescriptions Divines, de vous mettre en garde contre les suggestions nuisibles et provocatrices de vous éloigner de ceux qui agissent contre la paix et la tranquillité, de prier la Divine Providence pour le retour à la bonne voie des égarés et des exaltés, de mettre en pratique les lois Apostoliques et Pontificales de l'Église, de prêter l'oreille aux exhortations de vos pasteurs et d'obéir à vos chefs. Vous mériterez par là les bénédictions du Père Céleste, les faveurs du fils unique, et les consolations du Saint-Esprit, lesquelles vous sauveront de tout danger visible et invisible, vous feront couler vos jours dans le bonheur et le bien-être suivant les volontés Divines et vous rendront digne d'une félicité parfaite et éternelle dans le séjour des justes.

Vivez en Dieu! Et nous vous souhaitons avec nos prières et bénédictions de longs jours heureux.

Le Patriarche des Arméniens de Turquie,
(Signé) Archevêque MALACHIA.

Écrit au Patriarcat des Arméniens à Constantinople, le 30e jour du mois d'Août, de l'an de grâce 1897, sous le No. 25 des Encycliques Patriarcales.

No. 174.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received October 18.)

(No. 601.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, October 13, 1897.*

WITH reference to my telegram No. 595 of the 6th instant, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Smyrna, respecting the movement of troops in the Vilayet of Aidin.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 174.

Consul Cumberbatch to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 77. Confidential.)
Sir, *Smyrna, October 7, 1897.*

WITH reference to my telegram of the 4th instant on the subject of military doings, I have the honour to report that great activity has been shown by the officials in procuring the 300 horses required from this vilayet, about 200 of which are already here or expected daily. Their destination is Constantinople for the mounted police force.

As regards the premonitory signs of preparations for mobilizing troops, I find that they are connected with the enrolment of recruits, which has caused some amount of discontent, owing to its being insisted upon whilst the men of the Reserves are still kept away from their homes.

I may add that the squadron, under Admiral Hafiz Pasha, has not moved from its anchorage in this harbour since its arrival on the 21st August.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. A. CUMBERBATCH.

No. 175.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received October 18.)

(No. 695.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, October 13, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to forward to your lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Trebizond, reporting the arrival there of the Reform Commissioners.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 175.

Consul Longworth to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 28.)
Sir, *Trebizond, October 4, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to report the arrival here of the Reform Commissioners: Shakir Pasha, Mavrogordato Effendi, Hassib Effendi, and Danish Bey.

They came from Erzeroum on the 2nd instant, and will be leaving for Samsoun at the end of this month with the intention of passing the winter at Amassia.

An exchange of visits with these gentlemen enabled me to hear their respective opinions on the condition of Anatolia, which they more or less agree in pronouncing satisfactory.

The measures thought by them necessary for the better government of the country are doubtless known to your Excellency, and I will not therefore venture to criticise them more than by remarking that they all seem to hinge on a question of money.

The Reports of the Commission, however interesting and important, are, I understand, rarely, if ever, read at Constantinople, so much so, that questions are sometimes asked which a perusal of them would fully answer.

I have, &c.
(Signed) D. Z. LONGWORTH.

No. 176.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received October 18.)

(No. 698.)
My Lord, *Therapia, October 13, 1897.*

IN transmitting herewith a despatch from Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum, respecting the concentration of troops in Van, I have the honour to call your Lordship's attention to Mr. Graves' concluding remarks as to the alleged designs of Zekki Pasha.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 176.

Consul Graves to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 36. Confidential.)
Sir, *Erzeroum, October 1, 1897.*

WITH reference to your Excellency's telegram of the 27th ultimo, I have the honour to offer the following observations on the concentration of Ottoman troops in the Van Vilayet.

During the early summer a force of some ten battalions of infantry was massed at Tutakh, in the Caza of Alntab, and there can be little doubt that this measure was occasioned by the activity of Armenian revolutionaries in Russia and Persia, and the uncertainty of the authorities as to the point where they were likely to attempt raids into Turkish territory. The choice of Tutakh, which lies just within the Vilayet of Erzeroum, when some point of the Van Vilayet might have seemed more suitable for the head-quarters of this force, is ascribed, and I believe rightly, to the Mushir Zekki Pasha's desire to embarrass Raouf Pasha, who thus became responsible for supporting these troops from the resources of the Erzeroum Vilayet.

When the Armenian revolutionaries finally made their incursion near Bashkala, the Tutakh troops were at once moved into Van, and more were called up, until they reached the present strength of twenty-five battalions of infantry, one field and two mountain batteries of artillery, and two regiments of cavalry (chiefly Hamidié).

The causes of this increased concentration of troops I believe to be two-fold. The first was that the Ottoman Government had really made up their minds, unless ample satisfaction was afforded them, to invade Persian territory as a punishment for the outrageous conduct of the Persian frontier authorities in harbouring the Armenian bands, and permitting them to levy war on a friendly Power without interference. In the second place, the Turkish military authorities, whether from panic or policy, so grossly exaggerated the numbers of the Armenian bands that the Central Government really may have believed that they had to cope with an army of Armenians instead of with a few desperadoes. And, although the danger of hostilities with Persia seems now past, it is not at all certain that the military authorities have been candid enough to admit the misleading nature of their first reports as to the strength of the revolutionaries and to propose the withdrawal of a part at least of the force now gathered in Van.

Another possible explanation of the continued concentration may be found in the impression which undoubtedly exists throughout Kurdistan that a "Kurdish question" in an acute form may be expected to arise in the near future. It is true that in Erzeroum I can learn nothing to confirm the suspicions which are rife at Van as to Zekki Pasha's ambitious and disloyal schemes, nor any story so circumstantial as that of the projected revolt of the Kurd tribes which reached the Vice-Consul at Bitlis.

But a spirit of unrest and discontent seems general among this turbulent race; the Hamidié organization, worse than useless as an element of military strength, might at any moment prove a treacherous weapon and turn against the Government which was ill-advised enough to create it; and whatever rôle she intends to play—whether that of a revolting Satrap, or of defender of the Sultan's sovereign rights, it is natural enough that Zekki Pasha should be anxious to keep together a considerable force of regular troops for either eventuality, under his direct orders.

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. W. GRAVES.

No. 177.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received October 18.)

(No. 699.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, October 14, 1897.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 370 of the 11th May, 1896, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copies of despatches which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Damascus, respecting the relations between the Greek Orthodox Patriarch there and his community.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 177.

Consul Richards to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 52.)

Damascus, October 1, 1897.

Sir,

WITH reference to Mr. Acting Consul Meshaka's despatch No. 7 of the 26th February, 1892, and Mr. Consul Eyres' despatches Nos. 15 and 20 of the 25th May and 21st December respectively, of the same year, reporting on the differences and consequent ill-feeling existing between Mgr. Spiridon, the Greek Orthodox Patriarch here, and a large majority of his community.

I have the honour to inform your Excellency that not only is there no abatement of this feeling during the past five years, but rather an increase both in depth and intensity.

Matters have, in fact, quite recently, reached a crisis, for a monster Petition signed by 600 persons of the Greek Orthodox community is just about to be presented to the Vali, praying for the deposition of the Patriarch, for which the petitioners give numerous reasons, of which even if only one-third be true there can be no doubt whatever that their request should be granted.

The following charges are brought against the Patriarch:—

1. The irregularity of his election, which was notoriously obtained by the corruption of Bishops and other influential persons. (It is alleged that the Patriarch spent £ E. 30,000 on his election.)

2. His gross ignorance of theology and general incapacity. (It is asserted that the Patriarch has received no regular theological training.)

3. His sanction of the forcible irruption into the Cathedral during Divine Service by persons in his employment, and that of the Bishop of Zahleh, for the purpose of arresting two priests (who were resisting his authority), and the subsequent violation of the Sanctuary in order to attain that end.

4. His granting of a divorce from his wife to a certain Damascene—who is at the same time a Turkish official—contrary to the laws of the Church.

5. His authorization of the illegal—because uncanonical—marriage of a wealthy Beyrout merchant for reasons which ought to have had no weight with him. It is asserted that he received a present of 1,000*l.*

6. His persistent efforts to sow strife and dissension among the members of his community.

7. His intrigues with the local authorities against his community.

8. His unlawful retention of a sum of 500 napoleons bequeathed by an Egyptian to the Convent of Saidnaya, near Damascus.

9. His refusal to hand over certain bonds and a sum of money amounting to £ E. 10,000, which were deposited in a bank at Athens in trust for the community, and of which he has wrongfully possessed himself.

10. His sale of church property.

11. His extortion of excessive sums of money from various convents.

12. His failure to carry out his promise of establishing a theological College here, and various other charges. At the end of the indictment the petitioners quoted an Article in the Ottoman Code according to which a Patriarch may be deposed for any one of three reasons, viz.:—

1. Ignorance of theology.

2. Being the cause of discord in his community; and

3. Behaving in a manner prejudicial to the interests of the Imperial Government,

they beg the Vali to request the Patriarch to resign.

Should his Excellency, however, they go on to say, not see his way to acceding to this request, they beg him to convoke a meeting of all the Bishops of the Patriarchal Province (with the exception of those of Zahleh and Hasbeya, who are partisans of the Patriarch), and instruct them to hold an inquiry into the matter, and, in short, to try the Patriarch according to the Laws and Ordinances of the Greek Orthodox Church.

The Patriarch has enjoyed hitherto the support of the local authorities, and, for the last two years, that of the Russian Consul, but so general and so intense is the feeling of animosity which he has aroused in his community that nothing, one would think, can save him now.

I have, &c.

(Signed) W. S. RICHARDS.

Inclosure 2 in No. 177.

Consul Richards to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 53. Confidential.)

Damascus, October 2, 1897.

Sir,

WITH reference to Mr. Consul Eyres' despatches Nos. 13 and 24 of the 23rd April and the 8th July, 1896, respectively, I have the honour to inform your Excellency that the Greek Orthodox Patriarch here has written officially to M. Bélaieff, the Russian Consul, to inform him that he can no longer permit the exercise of Russian Consular supervision and control of the Greek Orthodox schools situated within his province; he adds that he intends to resume possession of these schools at once.

The reasons which the Patriarch assigns in his letter for this very sudden and complete change of front (he has been the very humble servant of the Russian Consul for the last two years) is, firstly, the constant state of friction in his relations with the local authorities, to which his subservience to the Russian Consul and the "Société de Palestine" has led; and, secondly, the animosity towards himself which the abandonment of authority over the schools has aroused among the vast majority of the members of his community.

The Russian Consul on receipt of this communication went, it appears, to the Vali, and asked him if the allegations of the Patriarch were true, to which Nazim Pasha replied, I am informed, in the negative.

While it is quite possible, and, indeed, only too probable, that the great increase of prestige which the Russian Consul has gained through his acquirement of control over the Greek schools is anything but pleasing to the local authorities, and that they, in consequence, have visited their displeasure on the Patriarch as the person mainly, if not solely, responsible for this state of things; it is extremely doubtful, on the other hand, whether this important concession on the part of the Patriarch has contributed in any sensible degree to his unpopularity with his community. The explanation of this is two-fold.

In the first place, the revenues of the community are not sufficient to maintain the schools on the footing on which Russian official liberality has placed them, more especially as the present Patriarch contributes very little towards their support from the funds at his disposal, which, however, were they properly administered, would more than suffice for the purpose.

In the second place, it is hoped by the party hostile to the Patriarch that the fact of the latter's subservience to Russian influence will so injure him in the eyes of the Œcumenical Patriarch and other personages of note not residing in Syria, that they will use all the influence which they possess in order to bring about his deposition.

I will merely state, in conclusion, that the very small minority of the Greek Orthodox community which is still favourable to the Patriarch is composed entirely of a few officials and other persons who have excellent reasons for continuing their support of the man who is condemned by all the rest of their coreligionists.

I have, &c.

(Signed) W. S. RICHARDS.

No. 178.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received October* 18.)

(No. 700.)

Constantinople, October 14, 1897.

My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Kharput respecting the state of affairs at that place and at Eghin.

I have approved Mr. Fontana's action in making representations to the Vali of Kharput.

I have, &c.

(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 178.

Vice-Consul Fontana to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 44.)
Sir, *Kharput, September 25, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to report that I duly communicated to the Vali the gist of my telegram to your Excellency of the 5th instant with regard to the fear existing among the Armenians at Eghin and the impression prevailing there that troubles were imminent at Kharput.

I added that my information was derived from a trustworthy correspondent at the former town, who further assured me that the Armenians there had been warned by friendly Turks that they were in danger, and that the Kaïmakam had signified privately to a Christian Notable that the arrival of a certain Sheikh at Eghin inspired him with anxiety.

As far as Kharput was concerned, I stated that both the Protestant and Catholic Missions had acquainted me with the dread of the Armenians and ominous attitude of the Turks, that the Moslem armourers and sword-makers were just then very busily employed, and that a considerable number of Mussulman peasants were bringing weapons to the town for repair.

In conclusion, I mentioned that a rumour was afloat that the Agas of Khosh, who are the most influential in the whole plain, had received weapons for distribution to the villagers should disturbances supervene, as was the case prior to the outbreak of 1895.

The Vali denied that there was any cause for any anxiety at Kharput or even at Eghin, where, he said, he had shortly before caused passports to be freely issued and a sum of £T. 200 to be collected for indigent Armenians; that it was impossible that arms could have been dealt out to the Khosh Agas, as orders had been received from Constantinople that, in the event of an uprising, the Moslem citizens should not interfere, but should leave the task of pacification to the authorities and the troops.

I congratulated Raouf Bey upon his humane action at Eghin, and then submitted that I had always striven to avoid unnecessarily raising the alarm—which he readily admitted—but remarked that it would be a great pity should his visit to Eghin prove to have been the preface to further loss of life there, and I ended by suggesting:—

1. That he should telegraph my correspondent's statements to the Kaïmakam, with instructions to report thereupon, and take, meanwhile, every precaution to insure tranquillity.

2. That orders should be sent to the police authorities at Kharput to watch the armourers' shops and discourage their unwonted activity.

The Vali listened very courteously to all that I said, and was pleased to act upon both my suggestions.

A later letter from Eghin states that comparative calm now reigns among the Christians there, and at Kharput all appears tranquil for the moment, though any untoward event at Constantinople would very properly result in a recrudescence of disquiet if it were not productive of far more serious results.

I have, &c.
(Signed) RAPHAEL A. FONTANA.

No. 179.

Mr. Brownie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received October 18.)

(No. 158.)
My Lord, *Sinaia, October 12, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to report that an Armenian, an Ottoman subject, has recently been arrested at Galatz, and that the papers found on him were of a most compromising character, proving him to be a leading member of Revolutionary Committees, whose ramifications extend to Geneva, Constantinople, and Tiflis.

M. Sturdza, Minister for Foreign Affairs, in alluding to this incident, stated that, though there were established in Roumania Armenians of a perfectly inoffensive character, the Roumanian Government could not permit that their ports should become centres of disaffection, and that for that reason orders had been given for the arrest of this dangerous character. His expulsion, I am informed, will shortly follow.

I have, &c.
(Signed) HAMILTON E. BROWNE.

No. 180.

Mr. Elliot to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received October 18.)

(No. 190.)
My Lord, *Sophia, October 14, 1897.*

A NEWSPAPER having stated that several Armenians had recently been arrested at Bourgas and deported to Russia upon their denunciation by the Turkish police as revolutionary agents, I asked M. Stoïloff to-day what were the facts of the case. His Excellency said he knew nothing of any arrests at Bourgas, but that some time ago, upon information received from Constantinople, the rooms of certain Armenians at Varna were searched, and the seal of a Revolutionary Society having been found in them, the men (who were also proved to have sent threatening letters to Constantinople) were expelled the country, the only orders given to the authorities with respect to their destination being that they were not to be shipped to Turkey.

I have, &c.
(Signed) F. ELLIOT.

No. 181.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received October 25.)

(No. 703.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, October 16, 1897.*

WITH reference to my despatches No. 586 of the 2nd ultimo and No. 612 of the 9th ultimo, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul-General at Bagdad, reporting the actual dismissal of Reschid Bey, Mudir of Barwnrah, and the appointment of his successor.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 181.

Consul-General Loch to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 96.)
Sir, *Bagdad, September 21, 1897.*

WITH reference to correspondence ending with this Office despatch, dated the 6th instant, I have the honour to place below, for your Excellency's information, copy (in translation) of a letter, dated the 7th instant, from Mr. Nimrud Rassam, British Consular Agent, Mosul, reporting the dismissal of Reschid Bey, Mudir of Barwarah:—

"With reference to my letter dated the 30th ultimo, I have the honour to report that I have now come to know for certain that Reschid Bey, Mudir of Barwarah, has actually been dismissed, and a new Mudir appointed in his place, who proceeded to hold his post on Saturday, the 28th of last month."

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. LOCH, *Lieutenant-Colonel.*

No. 182.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received October 25.*)

(No. 704.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, October 16, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Trebizond on the subject of the financial condition of that vilayet.

I have, &c.

(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 182.

Consul Longworth to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 30.)

Sir, *Trebizond, October 7, 1897.*

THE economic aspect of this province is anything but satisfactory. It may justly be described as exhibiting a population reduced to penury, and an Administration incumbered by debts.

The situation is apparently one of anxiety as well as embarrassment. To an ordinary observer the whole Empire seems in great straits, and a general collapse imminent. But such an end may still be remote. What is nevertheless absolutely and urgently needed is a thorough change in the present defective fiscal policy, and on this financial experts agree, not the least among whom at Trebizond are the ex-functionaries of the Treasury, the Vali Cadri Bey and the Monavin Rouni Effendi.

Some figures have been collected by me lately which I think rather instructive. They were taken from the best available sources, and seem to me, on the whole, reliable. I shall endeavour to give them here with clearness and brevity.

The vilayet is composed of the Trebizond, Samsoun, Rizeh, and Gumushkhaneh Sandjaks. It covers an area of 12,375 square miles, consisting of: pasture lands, 4,787,150 acres; wood lands, 1,330,300 acres; and arable lands, 1,702,550 acres.

Next to that of Constantinople, the Lebanon, and perhaps Crete, it is the most densely populated province in Turkey.

No census has been taken since 1884, but the inhabitants may be roundly estimated to number 880,000 Mussulmans, 170,000 Greeks, and 50,000 Armenians, that is, 1,100,000 souls, or 89 per square mile.

It is, moreover, the only vilayet in Anatolia where cereals have to be imported for consumption. Even Indian corn, called locally "Inzoud," from being the staple article of food among the Laz villagers, scarcely reaches 5,000,000 bushels, which, with 500,000 bushels of wheat, gives as edible grains yielded by the soil an average of 5 bushels per inhabitant. Hence breadstuffs have to be procured to a large extent elsewhere at a cost of at least £ T. 900,000, and this, with the proceeds derived from the export of local productions, amounting at most to £ T. 800,000. The deficiency is probably more than covered by gains from traffic, &c., but, all the same, the country is left in a wretchedly poor condition.

The following Table shows the items of revenue and expenditure of the vilayet for the financial year ended the 1st (13th) March, 1897, compared with the budgets of the three preceding years:—

	1893–94.	1894–95.	1895–96.	1896–97.
Revenue.	£ T.	£ T.	£ T.	£ T.
Land tax	77,481	76,970	77,550	77,780
Trade Receipts	7,818	7,740	7,950	7,100
Military exemption tax	40,275	40,285	40,100	41,000
Sheep tax	29,175	28,650	29,100	29,250
Tithes	140,813	133,800	147,700	140,700
Mines and forests	3,031	4,100	5,250	3,800
Title-deeds and transfers	15,748	10,725	14,720	6,000
State lands revenue	154	102	150	120
Judicial fees and fines	6,105	3,680	5,050	4,300
Public instruction	7,458	5,300	7,700	8,000
Public works	14,010	6,800	12,500	11,000
Sundries	11,803	4,330	13,620	5,550
Total	370,631	323,665	363,870	396,150

	1893–94.	1894–95.	1895–96.	1896–97.
Expenditure.	£ T.	£ T.	£ T.	£ T.
Magistracy	10,178	8,000	10,200	7,860
Civil Service	42,703	42,800	43,500	49,640
Army	64,670	96,000	66,800	73,200
Navy	6,000	12,000	10,000	9,500
Gendarmery	24,464	23,000	26,400	26,480
Police	1,236	1,500	1,550	2,120
Sultan's Civil List	14,800	13,650	14,000	15,000
Assignments ("Havalehs")	206,074	124,660	194,420	122,650
Total	370,691	323,665	363,870	306,450

The above comprise the levies and disbursements made by the local authorities. It does not include certain distinct heads of revenue and expenditure, namely:—

1. Customs, which, together with the ports of Sinope and Ineboli, lying beyond the province, showed the sums of £ T. 83,240 received and £ T. 12,670 expended. The duties were on imports, £ T. 57,230; exports, £ T. 6,250; home traffic, £ T. 17,000; and as fines, &c., £ T. 2,770. The surplus of £ T. 70,570 was remitted as usual to Constantinople for the service, I believe, of the £ T. 5,000,000 loan of 1886.

2. Excise dues, assigned to the Public Debt Administration, the local branch of which takes in the adjoining Sandjaks of Castamouni, Bolou, Sinope, Amassia, and Karn-Hissar. The receipts were, on salt, £ T. 82,900; spirits and wines, £ T. 4,325; stamps, £ T. 16,700; and silk tithes, £ T. 1,060, besides £ T. 64,265 shared with the Government from tobacco, fishery, shooting licences, &c., making in all a total of £ T. 169,260, and leaving a net income of £ T. 136,060.

3. Municipal revenues, which are insufficient as well as insignificant. They amounted last year for the town of Trebizond, with, say, 45,000 inhabitants, to scarcely £ T. 2,000, derived mainly from selling the rights of levying weighing fees and petroleum storage fees to the highest bidders, at respectively £ T. 270 and £ T. 180. The fines reached about £ T. 500, and some £ T. 450 were received from taxes on vehicles, porters, auctions, &c., together with charges for lamplighters and scavengers.

There are in addition special revenues which for completeness may be mentioned briefly, though they do not directly affect the people or concern the Executive. Such are the lighthouse and sanitary dues, amounting each to about £ T. 10,000 a-year, as well as some £ T. 15,000 realized by the Turkish postal and telegraph services, the international branch of which shows an annual average of £ T. 2,000.

It may be safely concluded from the study of the above figures, duly modified by additions and deductions, that the taxes, duties, and rates of this vilayet fall in the aggregate £ T. 1 per head of the population. This is not all. There have been besides certain contributions called voluntary, but in reality compulsory, of which the following is a list:—

Military fund, £ T. 4,850; Cretan Moslems, £ T. 2,350; Anatolian poor, £ T. 1,260; volunteers, £ T. 2,250; and Yildiz Bazaar, £ T. 1,200, which, with free gifts in horses and articles valued at £ T. 8,280, brings up the total to £ T. 20,390.

An *insouciant* Government may care little what indigence exists so long as the taxes are paid in full. But this is no longer possible, now that a large number of people have literally nothing to give. To make matters worse, the authorities are deeply involved in pecuniary difficulties. There is as usual no money in the coffers, while outstanding claims are exceptionally heavy at Trebizond alone: £ T. 2,400 are due to army purveyors, and £ T. 1,000 to a native capitalist in balance of a temporary loan. Salaries, in the meanwhile, be it that of the Governor-General or that of a mere gendarme, are months in arrears, and even the doles, claimed as pensions by the infirm and old, widows and orphans, are left unpaid. What else can be expected when all large incomings are promptly withdrawn by Constantinople. The remittances in fact for the last six months already figure as £ T. 19,800 to the Palace, £ T. 18,000 to the Treasury, and £ T. 5,000 to the Marine Department, which with £ T. 18,000 to cover deficits in the budgets of Van Vilayet and the Hedjaz represent a total of £ T. 60,800. These sums were the proceeds mainly of the sheep tax, which, I may remark, should be collected in summer and not in spring, so that time may be allowed for payments to be made out of sales and not out of money often borrowed at three months' interest from 50 to 70 per cent.

That assets this year will fall short of liabilities is doubtless. As at present estimated the budget deficit will be at least £ T. 160,000, even if the revenues attain the improbable figure of £ T. 300,000. The following are the principal charges which, if partly paid, are mostly payable out of local funds:—

Civil, £ T. 95,000; military, £ T. 95,000; religious, £ T. 10,000; wool ordered by War Office, £ T. 20,000; pack animals bought for the war, £ T. 17,000; transport of military stores to inland stations, £ T. 45,000; and Anatolian railway claims, £ T. 120,000, besides £ T. 6,000 still due to the Ottoman Bank, as last year's Havalehs for £ T. 70,000, of which £ T. 60,000 had to be returned to Constantinople unpaid.

Among the most important sources of public income in this province are the tithes, which, with the exception of that on hazel nuts, will probably be low this year. No offers have been made for them, and, consequently, the expense of collection by the tedious process of a village to village visitation must fall on the Government. Villagers in general will doubtless do their utmost to have their crops undervalued, while, on the other hand, an order is still in force not to press Armenians looted in 1895 for the payment of these and some other imposts. This is an exception, which, however kindly meant, affects chiefly the kilometric guarantee of the Anatolian Railway. The tithes, in fact, of the Trebizond, Gumushkhaneh, and part of the Samsoun Sandjaks have been assigned since 1892 to the Public Debt Administration for this particular purpose. They are intended to cover an annual claim of £ T. 90,000, which, for the last two years, could not be realized in full. Besides the 10 per cent. on the evaluated products thus set apart there is a surtax of 12 per cent., which, ostensibly, if not actually, goes to the Departments of Public Works and Public Instruction. The former claims, moreover, from 200,000 men either four days' work or 12 piastres a-year; but as without funds there can be no road-making, even the well-to-do now offer labour instead of money, which in arrears amount to some £ T. 60,000.

Such is financially the condition of the country from which, we now hear, the Government is endeavouring to obtain taxes in advance and on promissory notes, a further supply of 2,500 pack animals. There is even a talk that an internal loan of £ T. 2,000,000 is contemplated, some £ T. 80,000 of which would fall on this province. It will have to be a forced loan, for the inhabitants have not yet forgotten the one of £ T. 250,000 floated in 1886 and redeemable in sixteen years, represented by £ T. 5 bonds at 6 per cent., each of which, being hitherto unpaid, may well be framed and hung up as object lessons.

A few more words in conclusion. To-morrow will be the anniversary of the Trebizond disturbances which mark clearly the present from the past. There have been before years of peculations and extortions accompanied at times by epidemics, but slight were the signs of financial exhaustion. Now it is otherwise. Wholesale massacres, followed by a miserable war, have exposed to want the rulers and the ruled, rendering the outlook, to say the least, gloomy.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. Z. LONGWORTH.

No. 183.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received October 25.)

(No. 708.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, October 19, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith extract of a letter which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Bitlis respecting the state of the Kurds in the Akhlat and Khizan districts.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 183.

Vice-Consul Cröe to Sir P. Currie.

(Extract.) *Bitlis, October 4, 1897.*

I RETURNED to Bitlis on the 30th September after a most interesting journey in Akhlat and Khizan, of which I am sending your Excellency a Report later. There is a nest of Kurds in the latter district, and they seem to do pretty much as they please in the way of levying taxes on the Christians, occupying their monasteries and churches, and appointing their own village authorities. The family of the late Sheikh Jelaluddin rule the country, and I do not think the Vali, and certainly not the Porte, realize the rod they are preparing for their own backs by not curbing them. Unless they rouse themselves, the Kurdish question must assume an acute form ere long, for the effects of the mistaken policy of letting these creatures loose on the Christians in 1895–96 are already only too apparent. Their heads, which are weak at any time, have been turned by much encouragement, and a door opened for the intrigues of Zekki Pasha, who is not slow to avail himself of the opportunity offered. I told the Vali what I had seen; and as he professed his utter ignorance of it, I offered to supply him with the information which I collected. It may serve the purpose of inducing him to visit his cazas, which he certainly ought to do, but the wiles and worries of Bitlis keep him tied to his post. Zekki Pasha and his Hamidiés have proved [too much] for the officers in Mulasgird, who cannot stand seeing their brother officers shot at by Kurds with impunity. Many of them tendered their resignations, but were stated by Zekki Pasha, who reproached them for complaining against Kurds, who, he said, would do them at least no harm. I believe in the end the resignations were withdrawn, but the fact is significant; and they have since drawn up a "Mazbata," which is headed by Belûl Bey, Kaïmakam of Boulanik, complaining of the excesses of the Hamidié regiments and their immunity from punishment.

No. 184.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received October 25.)

(No. 710.)
My Lord, *Therapia, October 19, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith copy of a despatch from Her Majesty's Consul-General at Bagdad respecting the maladministration of some of the outlying villages in the Mosul Vilayet.

I have instructed Mr. Block to bring the Petition of the Telkief villagers to the notice of the Porte, and, at the same time, to call attention to the insecurity of life and property in the Vilayet of Mosul.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 184.

Consul-General Loch to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 97.)
Sir, *Bagdad, September 21, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to very respectfully submit, for your Excellency's information, copy of a letter No. 42, dated the 7th September last, with its inclosure (both in translation), from Mr. Nimrud Rassam, British Consular Agent, Mosul, reporting on the maladministration and utter destitution of its inhabitants of certain of the outlying villages in the Vilayet of Mosul, and of the apathy evinced by his Excellency the Wali of Mosul to afford them any protection or redress.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. LOCH, *Lieutenant-Colonel.*

Inclosure 2 in No. 184.

Mr. Rassam to Consul-General Loch.

(No. 42.)
(Translation.)

Mosul, September 7, 1897.

I HAVE the honour to report that the exceeding corruptions of the officers of this vilayet, and especially the means, habits, and bribery of his Excellency the Wali, have of late given cause to great insurrectionary movements, and rendered the bad characters and most of the Chiefs of the Arab and Kurdish tribes so audacious as to dare to waylay and plunder caravans, and, moreover, to interfere with the inhabitants of villages, so that many of the villages lying between Dhok and Mosul have been totally reduced to ruin, and some to so few houses as to number four or five, in a state of insecurity of life and remnant of their property; they have therefore become so impatient as to decide to stop only for such a short time as would admit of collecting the produce of their cultivations, such as cotton and rice, &c., and then take flight, abandoning their villages, their houses, and their lands bare and deserted.

It is not only in the dependencies of the central town of Mosul that these outrages and depredations are rife, but the same state is also prevalent in the district of Dhok and Amadieh, and on passing through these districts on my return to Mosul I myself witnessed certain occurrences of that nature, and on the day of my departure from Dhok a caravan, which had been delayed there for five days by the insecurity of the road, of which I was also warned by the Youzbashi there, accompanied our party, and on our arrival at a village called "Fayida," about three hours from Dhok, we were encountered by a party of some Arab horsemen, and had they not seen the zaptiehs accompanying us, they would have undoubtedly attempted to plunder us.

Should this state be allowed to continue the remaining poor inhabitants will go to ruin, who, besides the loss suffered by destruction of their cultivation through mildew, are confined to their houses, being unable to go out and earn their livelihood, for most of the roads are unsafe, and every few days there is a caravan plundered; and when a complaint is made of such occurrences to the authorities the Wali falsifies it, instead of taking measures to restore security on the roads, and give the necessary orders for search and apprehension of the ruffians and the authors of the mischief. Among such instances as above there is one relating to "Telkief."

From some of the inhabitants of this village seventy mules have up to this day been plundered, besides properties and cash, and as often as they submitted Petitions to the Wali about these plunders, his Excellency tells them, "You are lying, for how can your complaints be true, that you possessed so many heads of cattle and other properties, since you assert that your cultivations have failed."

It plainly appears from such treatment of the Wali and from certain information, that his Excellency and some of the officials of Government in Mosul and in the districts are acting as assistants for, and I daresay as partners with, the ruffians, the highway robbers, and plunderers, and what proves this are the presents to the Wali made by some of the Sheikhs and masters of the ruffians; and I have even heard that some days ago the Wali sent for the Sheikh of the tribe of Jubaish, who refused to attend, saying, "What does the Wali want me for; it is only a few days that I sent him five mules which was his share, from what I gained by plundering, and since then I have gained nothing." He further promised, on oath, assuring to send his Excellency his share from whatever would fall into his hands on next occasion.

There is no doubt that these corruptions and maladministration will eventually give cause to the ruin of the remaining inhabitants of the villages and consequent depression of trade and revenue, so the inhabitants in general have given up all hopes of the least assistance from his Excellency the Wali towards bettering their position and securing their future, and only hope that the sublime Porte will be moved to compassion over their miserable state, if not through reports of the said occurrences, at least through the ruin of the country, and appoint a Wali who is able, kind, and honest to exert efforts in checking the ruffians and quelling these injurious movements.

Having obtained a copy of one of the Petitions which the inhabitants of the village of Telkief have presented to his Excellency the Wali, I herewith submit the same, which will serve to show your Honour to some extent the oppressions which are now prevailing.

(Signed) NIMRUD RASSAM.

Inclosure 3 in No. 184.

Petition addressed to the Wali of Mosul.

(Translation.)

WE, your humble petitioners, are from the inhabitants of the village of Telkief. We some time ago submitted a Petition representing that our cultivation of this year having been totally destroyed by the mildew and the inhabitants through that calamity reduced to the lowest level of poverty and pressing need, some left for Bagdad, some for Aduah, and some for here and there, and that, in order to impart security to the remaining inhabitants for future, solicited that the payment of the Government dues may be put off until next year, and a sufficient sum of money may be lent to provide for their food and for seed, but have hitherto experienced no result, although we continue to wait for the kindness and commiseration of Government; but as there is no provision in the village to supply food for our beasts of the plough, our family, and for seed, we sent our said beasts to Amadieh, Dhok, and Shammak to carry loads of such goods as gall-nuts, raisins, and corn, but wherever we go we are plundered.

One of the instances is what occurred this week. One by name of Yusuf Abro and another Mansoor Yeldo and five companions were going to Amadieh; when they came near the village Mamani they were attacked by the following men, all armed with Martini guns, namely, the notorious villain named Ali Kando and his nephew, Ibrahim Kando, with Ali Fatcheh, of the village Birsafki, and Nubbi, of the village of Bakir, and some others who plundered nine mules, fifty medjidies, two loads of wheat, and certain other things; and besides this act of plunder, one named Marogee, son of Oyrdin Najar, received a bullet in his leg, and is now confined to bed at Alkosh.

On a second occasion, when one Murogee Daleel and Petrus Kachal and five companions were returning from Dhok, they were attacked between the Fayida and Talbisna villages by twelve horsemen from the Jubaish and Karkari tribes, who took away one mule, three pack-horses with two donkeys, also money and things.

On a third occasion, when Micha Bajo and Hormuz Mogee and Mansoor Hurli were returning from the district of Amadieh, they were attacked by the same Ali Kando, accompanied by Ali and Haudan, sons of Saeed Effendi, of the village of Sarik, with Allou, son of Ahmed Musto Saffan, and others, who plundered six mules, three donkeys, and 109 silver medjidies, and all their things.

On the fourth occasion, when Petrus Yeldo and Kako Mashouni and their companions were returning from Zako were attacked by thirty or forty horsemen between Telfesna and Fayida villages, and these horsemen were from the Jubaish and Albu Hassad tribes and from the inhabitants of Telanfer, who took seven mules and pack-horses with their loads, eleven donkeys, one cow, 150 medjidies, three gold coins, and property to the value of 1,000 piastres.

These successive misfortunes have left no confidence for safety for the remaining inhabitants of that village, so much so, that they not only feel insecure to go out to work the plough and sow seed, but dare not to go half-an-hour distant to fetch water. Thus the village is going to fall into total ruin.

We, therefore, bring the circumstances to your Excellency's notice, and solicit to adopt the means of causing these mischievous men to be brought in and our properties to be recovered, and arrangements may be made to put an end to such state of matters, we humbly taking refuge with your Excellency beg for mercy.

(Signed) The Head Priest of the village Telkief.
The Priest of the village Telkief.
The Priest " "
The Mukhtar of the quarter Shango.
The Mukhtar " Guyzi.
The Mukhtar " Mart Shemuni.
The Mukhtar " Samoonia.
The Mukhtar " Cashat.
Three Elders.

Mosul, September 7, 1897.

No. 185.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received October 25.)

(No. 713.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, October 21, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Damascus, reporting the exemption of Southern Druses from payment of tithes.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 185.

Consul Richards to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 54.)
Sir, *Damascus, October 11, 1897.*

WITH reference to previous correspondence, I have the honour to inform your Excellency that the Druses inhabiting the southern districts of the Jebel Druse recently petitioned the Vali with a view to be exempted from the payment of the tithe, on the ground that a very considerable proportion of their crops had been devoured by locusts. His Excellency having inquired into the matter, convinced himself of the truth of the statement made by the petitioners, and consequently of the reasonableness of their request, the substance of which he communicated to the Porte. In reply, he has received an Imperial Irade exempting the Southern Druses from the payment of this tax during the present year. The Imperial action in this matter, as indeed throughout the recent negotiations between the authorities and the all-but-rebellious tribesmen, has been distinguished by a very marked tendency towards leniency and conciliation, qualities which had they been steadily and systematically exercised in this direction, with a due admixture of firmness, would in all probability have rendered impossible the occurrence of such rebellious outbreaks as the Hauran has witnessed during the last three years.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. S. RICHARDS.

No. 186.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received October 25.)

(No. 714.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, October 21, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Damascus, reporting the suspension of payment of official salaries.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 186.

Consul Richards to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 55.)
Sir, *Damascus, October 11, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to inform your Excellency that, according to a report which I believe to be well founded, an order has been received here from the Ministry of Finance prohibiting the payment of any official salaries, or, indeed, of any sums whatever due from the local Treasury to public or private persons, from now up to the end of the current Turkish financial year. It is stated that the payment of a sum of £ T. 20,000 will be required from the fiscal authorities of this province during that period, and that the whole sum which it is proposed to raise in this way throughout the Empire is 2,000,000*l.* I should add that the sum demanded from the vilayet is, in some fairly well informed quarters, put as high as £ T. 72,000.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. S. RICHARDS.

No. 187.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received October 25.)

(No. 715.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, October 21, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Bitlis, stating the winter requirements for Armenian relief.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 187.

Vice-Consul Crow to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 26.)
Sir, *Bitlis, October 3, 1897.*

IN accordance with the instructions contained in your Excellency's telegram of the 20th September regarding the relief requirements of this district for the winter, I have the honour to report as follows:—

It is impossible to form any accurate estimate of the calls which may be made on the funds during the winter months owing to the uncertain nature of the factors to be considered. These are three—severity of the winter, prospective plundering, and general depredation by the Kurds during the autumn, and the basis on which current taxes and arrears of taxes are collected by the Government, and the extent to which the villages are to be drained of their meagre resources in consequence.

The harvest is generally good, but in the Mush and Akhlat districts the local authorities have been allowed to take such very scanty and inadequate measures to check the wholesale plundering of grain, cattle, and dwellings during the summer months, that I am at a loss to say what the exigencies of the winter may demand, and we shall probably have to maintain the entire population of several villages in those districts alone.

Sasun in June and July was in a condition bordering on prosperity, but, as reported in my despatch No. 23, fresh disturbances have occurred, and the results of the years' labours of many families have been destroyed by fire or carried off by the Kurds. The number of necessitous cases therefore in Sasun will presumably increase.

The Mush plain, whatever assurances the Sublime Porte, the Vali, or the Mutessarif may give to the contrary, is in a lamentable condition, and the abuses perpetrated in that formerly prosperous district are an outrage to humanity and a disgrace even to the low standard of government established throughout the Asiatic provinces of the Empire.

In Khizan, in spite of good harvests and general tranquility, there remains much poverty, and we may be called upon to support many families, whose return to Christianity has indeed been authorized by the Government, but whom the fanaticism of their Kurdish neighbours, unchecked by any authority, compels to abandon their homes and seek other settlements.

In Bitlis many families are entirely supported by the funds, and allowance must be made for a large influx of refugees from the outlying districts and surrounding villages.

The prospect is not a bright one, and our requirements are likely to increase *pari passu* with the decadence brought about in these districts by administrative abuses and systematic misgovernment. If the present unfavourable conditions are aggravated by a severe winter, the distress will be very great and any estimate wholly inadequate.

As far as it is possible to make any forecast at present, I should say our requirements on the most limited scale would be as follows:—

	Persons.
Bitlis Town refugees	1,000
Khizan	1,000
Ahklat (five villages)	1,000
Mush refugees	1,000
Total	4,000

	£T.
4,000 persons at 1 piastre each per week for 22 weeks (say)	900
Mush Plain	100
Tools for Tahori	100
Bitlis widows and orphans	100
Casual relief: autumn requirements and emergencies	500
Total	1,700

Of this sum we have about £T. 1,100 in hand and require another £T. 600.

I have, &c.

(Signed) FRANCIS EDWARD CROW.

No. 188.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received October 25.*)

(No. 716.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, October 21, 1897.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 683 of the 7th October, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van, reporting more arrests of Armenians in Van.

I have, &c.

(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 188.

Vice-Consul Elliot to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 50.)

Sir, *Van, October 6, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to forward herewith extracts from private letters kindly placed at my disposal by the Rev. H. M. Allen, of the American Mission.

These illustrate the method adopted by the Persian Government in dealing with disorder.

More arrests have been made here, and I believe several prominent revolutionists are among the prisoners.

It is I fear, however, inevitable that the innocent will suffer with the guilty, the more so, as the Government professes to have received information from the men arrested and from papers found in their possession. The prisoners, if all accounts are true, seem to betray their accomplices, and all with whom they have had dealings, without hesitation.

The news as to what goes on in Persia as supplied by the Turkish Consul in Khoi cannot be relied on. It is said that he has an object of his own to serve in disseminating false and exaggerated reports.

I am of opinion that any further incursion by revolutionists from Persia is out of the question this year.

It depends very greatly on the measures taken by the Persian Government whether such occurrences will be possible in future.

I have, &c.

(Signed) G. S. ELLIOT.

Inclosure 2 in No. 188.

The Rev. W. A. Shedd to the Rev. H. M. Allen.

(Extract.) *Khoy, Persia, September 13, 1897.*

YOU will be interested in knowing what has happened in Salmas and here. You have heard of the attack on Shereef Agha. The most trustworthy accounts here put the figures of the killed at 150 Kurds, including women and children, and 19 Armenians.

The Turkish Government, of course, demanded the revolutionists, and finally 26 were arrested and sent to Tabriz; 7 of these proved to be Russian subjects, and so were handed over to the Russian Consul. The remaining 19 were sent back to Salmas in order to be sent over the border. They broke out of prison. Strange to say, most of them were caught, the balance being made up of substitutes—poor men who have no fault. One of the latter died in prison from the effects of a severe beating. The rest have been sent over into Turkey.

The danger from the Kurds has been cast into the shade for the present by the extortions of the Persian Government.

The Turkish Consul, Riza Bey, told me that he could count up to 8,000 tomans (£T. 1,818) taken by Persians, and the amount is probably much larger.

Here in Khoy not long ago Kurds from both sides of the border attacked the village of Var, robbing and killing the people. The number of killed is variously estimated at from 50 to 150 Armenians, and 12 to 24 Moslems. Even some Moslem ladies were stripped of their ornaments and clothing. Among the dead are women and children.

The Kotur Armenians who returned to Kotur this summer have become Moslems. The Governor promises that they shall be brought back here and be free.

The revolutionists have mostly left the country, and you need not be apprehensive on their account. They are very unlikely to cross the border again, at least for the present.

Inclosure 3 in No. 188.

Letter written by the Rev. B. W. Labaree.

(Extract.) *Urmia, Persia, September 4, 1897.*

THE latest news here is an order that all refugees from Turkey, men, women, and children, shall be sent to Tabriz. It is a very strict order, and, if carried out, means untold suffering and death to about 6,000 souls, aside from those in Salmas. There the order is being put into operation.

Many of the poor are being collected in camp, and the rest are being squeezed for money.

Haftewan (a village in Salmas) was surrounded by the army with cannon lately, and it was demanded that the revolutionists be given up. The people said they would as soon be killed by the Government as the revolutionists, so they compromised by paying 150 tomans (34 liras), and the army withdrew.

Two other villages were treated in the same way.

No. 189.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received October 25.*)

(No. 717.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, October 21, 1897.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 698 of the 13th October, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum respecting the movements of troops to Van and the strength of the Erzeroum garrison.

I have, &c.

(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 189.

Consul Graves to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 38.)
Sir, *Erzeroum, October 8, 1897.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 36 of the 1st instant, I have the honour to report that during the past week another battery of mountain artillery has left Erzeroum for Jordan, besides various small parties of army Reserve men (Ikhtiyat) going to join their battalions, which are already in that district.

I am informed privately that the following troops remain in garrison at Erzeroum:—

	Men.
Infantry (three battalions of 27th Regiment) .. .. .. About	1,200
Cavalry .. .. "	800
Field Artillery .. .. "	1,500
Fortress Artillery .. .. "	1,500
Total .. .. "	5,000

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. W. GRAVES.

No. 190.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received November 1.)

(No. 718.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, October 22, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum, reporting the dismissal of Ibrahim Bey, Mutessarif of Bayazid.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 190.

Consul Graves to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 39.)
Sir, *Erzeroum, October 8, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to report that the Mutessarif of Bayazid, Ibrahim Bey Moukhlis, has been dismissed from his post, the Military Commander of Bayazid, Colonel Djebbar Bey, being left in charge as Acting Governor.

In my despatch No. 104 of the 9th October, 1896, I had the honour to furnish your Excellency with some details as to Ibrahim Bey's excellent antecedents, character, and abilities. He was appointed to Bayazid on the recommendation of the Vali, Raouf Pasha, who is his uncle, and while engaged in carrying out Raouf Pasha's policy of just severity towards the lawless Kurds of Bayazid, came into collision with the Military Commander who is now appointed to succeed him temporarily. The latter is well known as a drunken, quarrelsome fellow, and was formerly a fireman in Constantinople.

Ibrahim Bey's dismissal is one more example of the pernicious influence of the Mushir, Zekki Pasha, who had, I learn, demanded his removal on the ground that he had persistently disregarded the orders of the Commander of the IVth Army Corps. It also constitutes a fresh and serious defeat for Raouf Pasha in the endeavour he is making to withstand the continual encroachments and interference of Zekki Pasha, and may, I fear, induce him to relinquish the struggle in despair of a successful issue.

It would be most unfortunate if Ibrahim Bey's tried administrative capacity and integrity were lost to the country at a moment when such qualities are so badly needed, and I trust that means may be found to obtain for him some post in the public service where they may be worthily employed.

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. W. GRAVES.

No. 191.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received November 1.)

(No. 720.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, October 26, 1897.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 641 of the 18th ultimo, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van respecting the inquiry into the outrages alleged to have been committed by Sheikh Sadik.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 191.

Captain Elliot to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 51.)
Sir, *Van, October 7, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge your Excellency's despatch of the 18th September, inclosing a copy of the reply of the Porte on the subject of Sheikh Sadik.

The official who conducted the inquiry into the murder of the Nestorians and other outrages by Sheikh Sadik is the Public Prosecutor in Van, and doubtless supplied the Acting Vali with the answer to the Porte's inquiries.

The Metropolitan and the bulk of the Nestorian population of that district still remain in Persia afraid to return to their homes.

They have had good reason to fear.

I see no reason to modify any of the statements made in my despatches Nos. 31, 32, 33, or 34, unless it be the remark about Behri Pasha's severity (No. 33), about which opinions differ.

I have, &c.
(Signed) G. S. ELLIOT.

No. 192.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received November 1.)

(No. 721.)
My Lord, *Therapia, October 26, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Diarbekir, forwarding a translation of a Circular telegram recently sent by the Vali of that vilayet to the Mutessarifs and Kaimakams under him.

I have since received a similar communication from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Kharput, inclosing a copy of a telegram from the Palace to the Vali of that province.

The French Embassy have also received this document from their Consul.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 192.

Vice-Consul Waugh to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 13.)
Sir, *Diarbekir, October 10, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to transmit translation of a Circular telegram recently sent by the Vali to the Mutessarifs and Kaimakams under him.

It was communicated to me secretly, but I have no doubt of its being genuine.

It explains the obstructive methods adopted by the Vali, which have rendered abortive a fresh attempt made by my French colleague last month to recover some

of the abducted Christian women referred to in my despatch No. 12 of the 6th September.

The reopening of this case was due to a promise given by the Sultan to M. Cambon, at his Excellency's farewell audience, but the Vali converted the proceedings into the solemn farce termed "a judicial inquiry."

I have, &c.
(Signed) A. T. WAUGH.

(Translation.)

An Imperial Order and Firman, communicated from the Chief Secretary's office of the Imperial Palace in a telegram dated the 1st September, 1313 (13th September, 1897), states that orders have been given to the English Consuls to inquire into the number of the Armenians in Anatolia, and of the orphans, converts, and women taken into Mussulman houses and into the wealth and resources of the Armenians, and the condition of those condemned by the Courts.

Now it is notorious that all the disturbances originated with the Armenians; and it is evident that in their sudden attacks it was Mussulman women and children who remained in the hands of the Armenians, and certainly not Armenian women and children who remained in Mussulman hands. But efforts are always being made by foreigners to show that the Armenians are oppressed; and this causes prejudice to the State.

It is, therefore, the duty of loyal and zealous servants to prevent the hostile circulation by the Consuls of such false and damaging slanders; and whenever the case occurs, to immediately take steps to counteract them, and to report the matter. Any other conduct would be a breach of loyalty to the State and to Islam, and would entail grave responsibility.

In short, the result of the action and investigations of the Consuls should be to bring to light the intrigues and excesses of the Armenians; and it is to this object that every effort must be directed.

You are, therefore, to take all necessary measures and precautions in accordance with the terms of this Imperial Firman.

Inclosure 2 in No. 192.

Vice-Consul Fontana to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 47.)
Sir, *Kharpût, October* 11, 1897.

I HAVE the honour herewith to transmit to your Excellency copy with translation of a document purporting to be a Circular addressed by order of the Sultan to the Valis of the various provinces of Asiatic Turkey. I have not seen the original and cannot, therefore, vouch for the authenticity of the copy in question, although the source from which it reached me is, to the best of my knowledge, a reliable one.

The principal aim of the Circular would appear to be the obstruction by all possible means of any effort made by Consular officers to obtain the surrender of Armenian women and children abducted by Moslems during the disturbances.

I have, &c.
(Signed) RAPHAEL A. FONTANA.

Inclosure 3 in No. 192.

Circular addressed by order of the Sultan to the Valis of the various Provinces of Asiatic Turkey.

(Translation.)

THE British Consuls have been instructed to make investigations as to the extent of the Armenian population of Anatolia, the number of friendless (orphan) Armenian children and of the Armenian women converted to Mahommedanism and received into Moslem houses; the wealth and means of subsistence of the Armenians and the condition of those upon whom judgment has been passed.

Armenians prepared and incited (to revolt) were implicated, as is well known, in all the disturbances, and their sudden onsets must undoubtedly have resulted in Moslem women and children remaining in their hands. But although the fact of there being no Armenian women and children in the possession of Moslems admits

of no query, efforts are nevertheless being made to conduct the said investigations in such a manner as to invariably represent the Armenians as labouring under oppression; and as the consequences of this will prove injurious to the State, no opportunity should be afforded for calumny and falsehood likely to engender such injury through the Consuls acting in contrariety to this truth. Should, therefore, any case of the kind come to your notice, you should at once adopt precautionary measures and lose no time in reporting the matter in accordance with the duties incumbent upon loyalty and zeal.

In the event of your failing to do so, dishonour will accrue to the State and to Islamism, and the responsibility will fall upon you. It is necessary, in short, that, as the result of the Consuls' labours and investigations, the excesses and treason of the Armenians should be brought to light, and you should spare no effort to attain that end.

This, as commanded in the Imperial Order and Firman, communicated to you by telegram, dated the 1st (13th) September, 1313 (1897), from the First Secretary at the Palace, in obedience to which you should exercise all vigilance in pursuing the requisite course of action in your district.

No. 193.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received November 1.)

(No. 722.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, October* 26, 1897.

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Diarbekir reporting the insecurity caused by the Hamidieh troopers in the Sandjak of Mardin.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 193.

Vice-Consul Waugh to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 11.)
Sir, *Diarbekir, October* 10, 1897.

DURING my recent visit to the town and Sandjak of Mardin, I obtained general confirmation of the reports made to me of the state of anarchy to which certain Hamidieh Chiefs have brought the country.

The villages on the fringe of the great Mesopotamian plain, which begins right under the hill on which Mardin is perched, have never been exempt from the lawlessness of the neighbouring Kurdish and Arab tribes; but all agree that things were never so bad as now.

The Hamidieh troopers are nothing more, and nothing less, than licensed brigands. The cavalry officer in command lives at Mardin, and exercises no control; and the Law Courts, to whose jurisdiction they are nominally subject, are quite powerless.

Things would seem to have reached a climax when about ten days ago 20 camels and 350 sheep were driven off from within an hour of Diarbekir itself.

This is not a question of "showing that the Armenians are oppressed," for Moslems and Christians alike suffer.

I believe that the Vali is struggling against the influence which supports the Hamidiehs, but the fact that two new regiments are being enrolled argues against his success.

The new Mutessarif, whom I saw on his arrival at Mardin, is said to be examining the question; but no local efforts can avail against the influences at Constantinople.

I have, &c.
(Signed) A. T. WAUGH.

No. 194.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received November 1.)

(No. 727.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, October 28, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Trebizond, respecting the security of the district.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 194.

Consul Longworth to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 31.)
Sir, *Trebizond, October 23, 1897.*

IN my despatch of the 10th June I described as satisfactory the then state of public security in this vilayet. I would now report that during the summer months it has been as great, if not greater.

Incredible though it may be, such safety to life and property as at present exists has not been known for many a year. It is an agreeable surprise to find it so, supported, as is the fact, by the testimony of the oldest inhabitants as well as by a diary of events kept at this Consulate since 1885.

Acts of lawlessness and violence, indeed, have been remarkably few, while even such minor crimes and offences as more properly fall under ordinary police news show an unprecedented diminution.

Brigandage, in particular, seems to have died out. There are now no armed bands prowling about the country, excepting smugglers, who, in their fear of Cadri Bey, refrain most scrupulously from harassing the people of this vilayet.

The Seymmoglous in the east and Keussch Mehmet in the west, mentioned in my former despatch, have now, I understand, settled down to a quiet life. They may have been possibly awed by the perils of an outlaw's career, which was so aptly exemplified at Karaghead Dagh, where, on the 28th June, one of their imitators, a Kurd, of the Ehnali village, near Kerassond, met his death in an encounter with a detachment of gendarmes.

Not so, however, the Armenian, Minasoglou, who has also ceased to be a leader of bandits. This extraordinary man has had strange antecedents. Confined for some time in the Samsoun gaol as a political offender, he succeeded, early in July 1895, to make good his escape by killing three of his guards and taking possession of their weapons. Hotly pursued ever since, his capture could never be effected. He soon gained for himself popularity as well as notoriety. He seems to have been a sort of modern Robin Hood, extolled alike for his courage and generosity, feats of arms and deeds of valour. Happily for all concerned, he last week followed the example of his Lieutenant, Usseh, who, by surrendering himself voluntarily and by taking the required oath at Samsoun, has obtained, like many others, the full pardon of the Government.

The wisdom of thus treating brigands as belligerents may well be questioned; but no other course seems open to an Executive which lacks the necessary means of paying with regularity the guardians of public peace and order.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. Z. LONGWORTH.

No. 195.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received November 1.)

(No. 728.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, October 27, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Angora, reporting the departure of conscripts for Constantinople.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 195.

Consul Shipley to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 52.)
Sir, *Angora, October 23, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to report to your Excellency that the first 200 men—principally from the Angora district—of this year's levy of conscripts, left this town for Constantinople on the 17th and the 20th instant respectively.

I may add that I am informed on good authority that the number of these conscripts to be summoned for active service under the colours will not, under present arrangements, exceed the average of former years.

I have further the honour to report that at various intervals during the past month or six weeks batches of invalided soldiers, to the total number of about 1,200, have arrived here from Constantinople. Their sufferings, principally from fever, have, I am told, been very great, and many of them have complained very strongly of the inadequacy of the provision made for the sick and wounded by the Turkish medical staff.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. S. SHIPLEY.

No. 196.

Mr. Elliot to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received November 1.)

(No. 191.)
My Lord, *Sophia, October 23, 1897.*

IN my despatch No. 190 of the 14th instant I had the honour to report that M. Stoïloff said he was not aware that any Armenians had been arrested at Bourgas.

The following extract from a letter from Dr. Clarke, dated from Bourgas on the 21st instant, shows that arrests and expulsions did in fact take place:—

"The former helper in distribution employed by us until about two months ago has been required by the Government—on request of the Turkish Government—to go to Batoum.

"His friends say that the only cause was that he, and four others sent with him, have opposed the wealthy Armenian here, who last winter made trouble with the Armenian Relief Committee. He has influence with the Local Government, especially the Mayor, and procured this sentence, for which the authorities gave him no reason."

I have, &c.
(Signed) F. ELLIOT.

No. 197.

The Marquess of Salisbury to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 284.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, November 4, 1897.*

I HAVE received your Excellency's despatch No. 700 of the 14th ultimo, forwarding a Report from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Khârput respecting the state of affairs at that place and at Eghin.

I concur in your Excellency's approval of M. Fontana's action in making representations on the subject to the Vali of Khârput.

I am, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 198.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received November 5.)

(No. 629.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, November 5, 1897, 12 A.M.*

MR. CROW telegraphed to me from Siirt on 2nd November as follows:—

"Trial of Siirt murderers: My despatch No. 31 of 3rd ultimo.

"The case has been ordered to be retried for the three following reasons: that the accused were [? not] allowed a legal representative; that their declarations were inadmissible, having been taken under torture; and that their designation in the Judgment was incorrect, as they were all described as principals.

"The Court has adjourned, after holding two sittings, pending the arrival of the witnesses. Orders for the sale of the prisoners' property can only be executed after the final sentence. Only one of them has any property at all, and that of the value of only £T.10; the rest have nothing. The authorities assure me that the former sentence of fifteen years' imprisonment will be upheld.

"I leave Siirt on Saturday, but, as it seems desirable for me to watch the case a little longer, I propose to return early next week."

I am making inquiries as to the truth of the alleged use of torture.

No. 199.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received November 8.)

(No. 731. Confidential.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, October 29, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Jeddah, reporting on the state of affairs in the Hedjaz.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 199.

Consul Devey to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 96. Confidential.)
Sir, *Jeddah, October 12, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to report that on the whole there have been fewer instances of turbulence about Jeddah during the past month, but that between Tayif and Mecca the road has been most unsafe with frequent acts of violence and insolence and of petty brigandage on the part of the Bedouins, whilst the condition of the holy city of Medina has been becoming serious as the road thence to Yembo is completely cut and no supplies are allowed to pass, though there are plentiful stores at the last-named port.

Food stuffs at Medina have by now trebled perhaps in retail price, and quite recently a Sheikh of that town came to Mecca and attempted vainly to negotiate with

the rebel Harb Chiefs that one caravan at least might be allowed to pass from Yembo; indeed, had it not been for the arrival of a caravan of some 500 camels from Nejd a little while ago, Medina and its neighbourhood would have been reduced to a condition of famine. I hear that the Vali was for sending a force to punish or seize these disorderly Chiefs, rather than allowing terms to be made with them, but the Grand Shereef dissuaded him from extreme measures.

The tribes, as may be guessed, declare their intention of persisting in effrontery and turbulence so long as their just claims for arrears of dues remained unsettled on the part of the Grand Shereef.

In the meantime, on behalf of British Indians who have claims for sums robbed from them in this vicinity, I am pressing the Vali to obtain some indemnification from the Shereef. The several claims, some of them dating as far back as 1891, amount to a considerable aggregate.

Jeddah has been more tranquil probably owing to the arrival of an Egyptian steamer with abundant grain supplies, which are in no way being withheld from Bedouins' purchase as was half proposed now about eight weeks ago.

Rumours have been floated in this town that his Excellency Ahmed Ratib Pasha was about to be recalled, and through an error I was led to believe that the Grand Shereef was tendering his resignation; indeed, the state of his Highness's health had led him to mention such a contingency to our Vice-Consul at the time of the pilgrimage; and his indiscreet decision between the Harb and Hodeyl (*v.* my No. 38 of the 18th May) might well warrant such a course; but I can learn no foundation for these reports, which must be relegated to the category of irresponsible Bazaar gossip.

Here I may mention that Bazaar gossip has been very busy lately with foreign politics. The best informed authorities since the second week of September have been expatiating, doubtless with satisfaction, upon the overthrow of the British rule and the conquest of India by Afghânistan. On the 16th ultimo a paper in Arabic purporting to be a translated copy of a telegram from the Porte to the Vali was shown to the Vice-Consul; that it must have been at least partly false was clear from internal evidence, and hence presumably totally false. Now it seems pretty sure that this report originated from Mecca, or, if not so, those responsible for its utterance were at some pains that this impression should be produced upon the Vice-Consul and myself. And, at any rate, British Indians and others of Mecca were largely repeating by letter such rumours to their friends here.

I attempted to account to myself for such a malicious hoax, and might suggest a threefold explanation for it:—

1. Tactics of retaliation for the Sultan having been dubbed "assassin" in the British press.

2. Possible presence among British Indian Mecca residents and visitors of fanatical or implacable foes to British rule.

3. A local attempt to lower the value of bills and notes on India, not unsuccessful.

The value of silver coin, in particular the Mexican dollar, was, only a month or two ago, forced down some 15 per cent. by manœuvring in the market, but this fictitious depression could only be maintained a fortnight or so. A branch of an Indian, or Asiatic, or Ottoman bank might to be able to do a considerable business here, and eradicate such unpleasing conditions.

Egyptian affairs attract some little notice, and about ten days ago it was rumoured that 4,000 troops were leaving Suez for Massowah to reoccupy Kassala.

The signing of the peace preliminaries was received with indifference, and a few Greeks are beginning to return. An absurd report was circulated that the indemnity was finally to be raised to 11,000,000*l.* From this fact may be deduced a vague indication that the Turks are not averse from peace—not that I would identify in the smallest degree Ottoman authorities with Bazaar rumours, but no doubt they can control them to some extent, or might even make use of them if it should be found to their interest.

A "Mukaddem," or member of the "Senoussi" College or Monastery at Mecca, lately left for Tripoli, and it is surmised that he may possibly be an emissary sent to stir up trouble for the French in Algiers, by the French Consul.

I have, &c.
(Signed) GEORGE POLLARD DEVEY.

Inclosure 2 in No. 199.

Lying telegrams forged re India.

(Telegraphic.) *September* 3 (*i.e.*, *September* 15), 1897.

AFGHANS took Peshawur, and on the 4th September advanced on Rawul Pindi and occupied it taking twelve guns and military munitions. The British troops are in retreat towards Punjab and the Afghans in pursuit. Lord Salisbury is greatly distressed at the situation of affairs in India.

[N.B.—Four or five days later a second false telegram reporting the fall of Lahore and other losses was shown about.

G. P. D.]

No. 200.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received November* 8.)

(No. 733.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, October* 30, 1897.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 644 of the 22nd September last, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Bitlis reporting on his visit to the Cazas of Akhlat, Boulanyk, and Melasgird.

I have, &c.

(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 200.

Mr. Crow to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 27.)

Sir, *Bitlis, October* 10, 1897.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith to your Excellency a Report on my visit to the Cazas of Akhlat, Boulanyk, and Malasgird in August last.

I have, &c.

(Signed) FRANCIS EDWARD CROW.

Inclosure 2 in No. 200.

Visit to the Cazas of Akhlat, Boulanyk, and Malasgird, August 1897.

Akhlat.—The Caza of Akhlat is situated to the north of Lake Van, and extends along the borders of the lake. It is at present administered by Fuad Bey, Kaïmakam, who was for several years employed in the Privy Purse Department at the Palace. There are nineteen Armenian and fourteen Kurdish villages. The Christian population numbers approximately 8,000 and the Kurdish 6,000 souls. There has been no general massacre in Akhlat, but the Caza suffered considerably at the hands of the Hydéranli Kurds in 1895 and 1896, who drove off the cattle from the Armenian villages in large numbers without interference from Government. The Relief Committee have spent about 700 liras in this district, of which 200 were expended in wheat and pecuniary relief, and the remaining 500 in oxen. The soil in Akhlat is heavy, and teams for ploughing purposes have to be strongly composed, and 500 liras have consequently not gone very far in supplying the Christian inhabitants with adequate means for cultivating their fields, while the utter absence of security in this part of the vilayet, as is evidenced by continuous plundering, and the recent abstraction by the Kurds of a large proportion of the oxen given by the Committee, renders it an open question whether this form of charity is the most suitable one for permanently relieving the wants of the suffering inhabitants. It is but fair to say that, in this respect, the Moslem population has, like the Armenian, suffered from the depredations of their Kurdish neighbours, though not to the same extent. There are few Turkish

agriculturalists, and the property of those resident in the town of Akhlat itself and the neighbouring villages is less exposed to the attacks of marauders, who generally, though not always, confine themselves to pillaging the more remote hamlets. The gendarmerie and police force sent in pursuit of retreating plunderers have not been spared, and, though the former are precluded by Standing Orders from wounding or killing Kurds, there is very little reciprocity exercised in this respect by the Kurds themselves, who resist the recapture of their booty, and make fair practice against their assailants whenever opportunity occurs.

The insecurity of the Caza is complete, the Armenians in many villages fearing even to occupy their houses at night-time, and seeking shelter with their families, and such cattle as they have left, in remote valleys and inaccessible hiding places. In some instances Kurdish Aghas and their servants, propitiated by the free yearly grant of sheep, oxen, grain, and money, have constituted themselves the guardians of villages, and protect the inhabitants from the attacks of other members of their tribe. In others the villagers, too impoverished to provide themselves with so adequate a means of defence have nevertheless engaged the services of a single Kurdish hillman to patrol the village at night-time, and guard the empty houses, while the population, men, women, and children, seek the secure recesses of some hidden retreat.

The Kaïmakam, who conversed with me freely on these matters, stated that he was powerless to remedy the situation, and administered his district on the principle of *laissez faire*, pending his removal to some more congenial appointment, abstaining as much as possible, while he remained, from damaging his own reputation by the communication of too many unpleasant truths to the ears of the Central Government; while the Vali of the province, whose attention I drew to the reign of terror now existing in the north-eastern portion of his Government, replied that when a Vali was helpless what could be expected of a Kaïmakam.

I found the reports which had previously reached me of the melancholy condition of the Christian population of these parts far from exaggerated, and the following summary of the information derived from the various villages which I visited in Akhlat shows the urgent necessity for the adoption of drastic measures, in order to create a condition of things offering some guarantee for the security of the lives and property of the inhabitants.

Kidzvagh, an Armenian village of seventy houses, the tithes of which were sold last year for £ T. 227, was plundered in October 1896 by the followers of Hussein Pasha, the leading Hyderanli Kurd. Two thousand sheep were carried off and distributed by Hussein Pasha among his relatives and adherents. During the disturbances of 1895 the inhabitants purchased their protection from the Jaugho Kurds of Van at a cost of 300 sheep, 400 gobes of wheat, and 1,000 piastres. There are no schools in the village, and the population are so ignorant that they are unable to make their own tithe calculations.

Zaghag is an Armenian village of 200 houses. Reza Agha's Hamidieh servants, on the 22nd June, carried off 95 cows belonging to the inhabitants from the slopes of Mount Nimrod, where they were pasturing. The Kaïmakam of Akhlat discovered their whereabouts, but they were never recovered. Armenians from this village, including a Protestant teacher, were arrested on political charges, and have lately been transferred to the Bitlis prisons for trial, together with other Armenian political prisoners from Akhlat.

Aghag is an Armenian village of twenty-five houses. The tithes were sold this year for the same price as last, 7,000 piastres, though, their oxen having been stolen, and many fields consequently left uncultivated, the crop produced is only half that realized in the previous harvest. This sum was, however, subsequently reduced by the Kaïmakam, on the hardship being represented to him, to 6,200 piastres. They were plundered twice in 1895, once in 1896, and again on the 22nd August, the night after I left the village.

The oxen taken on the last occasion were recovered by gendarmes on the following morning, but the household property was not restored. It is curious to note in connection with this robbery that two horses were abandoned by the robbers, who had provided themselves with better animals from the village. Those left were Hamidieh mounts, and were branded with the number 20, which is that of the Hamidieh regiment, commanded by Fatulian Bey, a prominent Kurdish Chief of Malasgird, who is noted for his excesses, and whose brother, Reza Agha, has lately been sent to Bitlis to take his trial for acts of brigandage and violence committed in Boulanyk and Malasgird. Six relief oxen were taken from Aghag in 1896, and four

last July. They have not been recovered. The village has been twice relieved, both with money and oxen, but it is of little use, as nothing remains.

Yeuk, an Armenian village of 100 houses, was plundered in August this year, and lost forty oxen.

Subvasor, an Armenian village containing from forty to fifty houses, was attacked by Kurds on the 17th August, who killed a man and wounded two women. They lost six oxen.

Koshtian, an Armenian village of about forty houses, was attacked by Kurds on the 21st August. They took forty oxen and all the sheep.

Mudnavank is an Armenian village containing an old monastery and some twenty houses dug out of the rock in the face of the cliff. Kurds attacked the place in 1895, and carried off thirty sheep, ten cows, and five oxen from the monastery, leaving nothing but twelve sheep, which were stolen last April. The village was plundered three times in 1896, the houses stripped, and forty oxen carried off. Representations were made to the Kaïmakam, but no steps taken, and no property recovered. The latter, according to a statement of a priest at the monastery, evinced ill-humour at the repetition of complaints, and expressed his opinion that it was a pity the Kurds did not kill the inhabitants outright, instead of stealing their property, as it gave less trouble. The village having been deprived of most of its oxen last year, only half the fields were cultivated, with the result that the yield this harvest is less than half that of previous years. The severity of taxation has been somewhat relaxed in the case of Madnavank, and the tithes this year were sold for £ T. 15 to a Turk of Bitlis. Even the Government has been forced to admit that there is little or no profit to be made out of a village which has been plundered five consecutive times in three years. Madnavank received ten oxen from the Relief Committee, which were stolen by the Kurds last July, and have not been recovered.

Hersonk is an Armenian village of thirty houses. The inhabitants were plundered in 1895, and lost 1,500 sheep besides oxen and cows. The Kurds pillaged the place again three times in 1896, and carried off the few animals which they had succeeded in collecting in the meantime. The inhabitants have petitioned the Government on each occasion without success. Owing to the absence of cattle cultivation has been much reduced, and the tithes of the village were sold this year to a Turk of Akhlat for £ T. 15 as against £ T. 60 last year. Taxes have been much relaxed, and only the labour tax enforced this year.

Akrag is a small Armenian hamlet containing seven houses. The inhabitants were plundered three times in 1895, twice in 1896, and again in July 1897; twelve oxen given by the Relief Committee were stolen, but an equivalent number of inferior animals were recovered by the Government and presented to them. They lost 500 sheep and fifty oxen in 1895. Being deprived of their oxen they have only been able to cultivate two fields, and will probably starve in the winter unless they receive external support.

Aemaldin is an Armenian village containing twenty houses. In 1895 they lost 1,400 sheep, 320 cattle, and 80 donkeys, besides bedding and household effects. They were plundered twice in 1896, and again this year, when they lost the twenty-six oxen given them by the Relief Committee. They purchased these back from the Kurds for £ T. 25 but inferior animals were substituted for those taken.

The Government has not succeeded in recovering any of their property, and the village, as is evidenced by the reduction in the tithe, has sunk to one-fourth of its former value. In 1895 it was sold for £ T. 110, and in 1896 for £ T. 56, and in 1897 for £ T. 28. Taxation has been reduced.

For the past month the inhabitants seeing the villages round pillaged, and fearful of further attacks, have abstained from occupying their houses at night, and taking their families and cattle with them camp in the neighbouring valleys and in places less exposed than their own houses. The empty houses and such property as is left are guarded by a dangho Kurdish brigand, who has been engaged by the villagers for this purpose.

The Kurds of these districts are either thieves or policemen, when employed in the latter capacity by the Christian villages they make very good guardians, and, when their services are dispensed with, they take to the road and plunder those whom they formerly protected without the smallest compunction.

Gerkhoos is a large Armenian village containing 100 houses. They have retained the services of two Kurdish Aghas of the Hassananli tribe, who now reside among them with their servants, and protect the inhabitants. The remuneration of these Aghas, judging by the resources of the village, seems high, but the protection they

afford is effective, and no disturbances have taken place there. The measure has not met with the approval of the Kaïmakam, who resents the invocation of mercenary aid for village protection as casting an aspersion on his own administration, and on the capacity of his police force to exercise the necessary control. He is consequently doing his utmost to dislodge the guardians from the village.

Zaghque has been plundered five times in the last three years. There is nothing left in the way of property or cattle, and the inhabitants are being constantly relieved. The thirty-two relief oxen given this spring have been stolen, and have not been recovered.

The total number of relief cattle given in the Caza of Akhlat was 166, and of these seventy-eight were stolen by Kurds, and not recovered. Twenty-six have indeed been repurchased from the robbers by the owners, but very inferior animals were substituted for those given by the Committee.

All these cases have been brought to the notice of the various Kaïmakams who have been charged with the administration of the Caza since 1895, and the inhabitants have grown weary of their ineffective representations. With the exception of the more recent case of pillage at Aghaz on the 24th August during my visit, few effectual measures have been taken by the Kaïmakams to recover the stolen property, to say nothing of punishing the offenders, but the success then attained shows that it is not impossible even for a Kaïmakam to make some headway against the evil if he is prompt, and his efforts are genuine.

The inhabitants of Madnevank, Zaghque, Akrag, and Azhag, informed the Kaïmakam of the loss of the relief cattle, and gave the names of the Kurds and Circassians guilty of the theft. One man was caught and imprisoned, and the oxen of certain Kurds of Akhlat, which were taken at the same time and by the same people, were recovered on these proofs, but the Armenians, with the exception of those of Ahrag, got no oxen back at all, the Kaïmakam finding that the evidence adduced, though apparently sufficiently good to benefit the Turks, was inadequate to enable the Christians themselves to recover their cattle.

It is hardly surprising that such conduct on the part of the Kaïmakam should have led to a general belief among the Armenians that the former, who is of Circassian birth, has associated himself with the Circassian and Kurdish cattle-lifters, and has a personal interest in the success of their raids which prevents his taking any efficient measures to check them. It is difficult to verify reports of this kind, and, to listen to the Kaïmakam himself, one would suppose that, though despairing of good results, he was a paragon of administrative virtue, afflicted only with the more venial failings of human nature and full of sincere regrets that the apathy of the central authorities had stultified his own genuine efforts in the beginning for the good government of his Caza.

Boulanyk.—The Caza of Boulanyk lies to the north of Akhlat, and contains twenty-five Armenian and twenty-one Kurdish villages. The Christian population is approximately 18,000 and the Kurdish 8,500. It is a great agricultural district, devoted almost entirely to the production of cereals. The presence of the Hassananli tribe of Kurds and that of the Hamidieh resident in the neighbourhood of Malasgird and on the borders of Boulanyk, check the material development of this region and lead to constant loss of life and property among the Christian inhabitants.

The Kaïmakam, Belal Bey, who resides at Gop, in the north of the Caza, is elderly but active, and is reported by the Christians themselves to be doing his best to check the plundering which goes on all round him. He is constantly telegraphing to the authorities at Bitlis and Constantinople for assistance to put a stop to the deplorable excesses of the Kurds, but little or no attention is paid to him. When troops were being withdrawn in consequence of the recent disturbances in Hakkiari, he telegraphed for reinforcements, and succeeded in retaining a small number of soldiers for the protection of his district. But the total number of regulars in Boulanyk is only twenty-five, besides the usual complement of gendarmes, and the force, therefore, at the disposal of the Kaïmakam is wholly inadequate to face any serious disturbance. Behiadin Pasha, now stationed at Malasgird, who has a considerable force at his command, is supposed to assist him; but any movement of troops depends entirely on the issue of direct orders from the Mushir at Erzingian, and Zeki Pasha's probity, when called upon to repress Kurdish disorders, is too well known to necessitate comment.

The district was not much affected by the events of 1895–96, as the Christian villages are regarded by the Hassananli Kurds as their exclusive monopoly, and any external interference from the Hyderanlis or other tribes would lead to reprisals

being taken by the former, who protect against others what they are pleased to consider as their own property. To use their own words, they didn't plunder in 1895 because they can always take what they want.

A review of the principal villages serves to show that, though the district may be safe from the incursions of the Kurds of other districts, the indigenous tribes exercise the monopoly of plunder, pillage, and expropriation of the Christian peasants to its fullest extent.

Six years ago the Armenian population of the village of Piran, consisting of fifty houses, were turned out of their homes by Asad Agha, a brother of Agas Agha, of Dirdoys, who installed Kurds in their place. Fifteen Christian families still remain there, but live in the most abject poverty. Before this high-handed proceeding the village tithes were sold annually for £ T. 100, whereas this year they have sunk to £ T. 20. A similar proceeding occurred at Khalshekir, an Armenian settlement of fifty houses, which was occupied two years ago by Mehomet Said, a brother of Dereh Agha, and a Hassananli Hamidieh. The Armenians were forcibly expelled from their homes and their fields seized. Mehomet Said is this year building himself a large house, and compels the Armenian peasants round to do the work for him without payment.

At Latar, a half Armenian half Kurdish village, the fifty Christian houses were plundered a month ago by Hamidiehs, of Reza, and Suleiman Agha, who carried off all the cattle belonging to the Christians.

Nirlar, a village consisting of twenty Armenian houses, was occupied by Dereh Agha two years ago. His Hamidiehs turned the inhabitants out of their homes and seized their fields. They were left with fifty oxen, which Suleiman Agha, of Tundrak, stole last July.

Reza Agha plundered the Armenian village of Machithi, consisting of eighty houses in June last, and carried off thirty sheep and twenty-five oxen. The villagers have now put themselves under the protection of another powerful Hassananli Agha, but the disadvantage attending this proceeding is, that it generally leads to their protector occupying the village, and to the ultimate dispossession of the original inhabitants.

Yunjalon was plundered in 1896 of most of its sheep, and the remaining 100 were taken just before my arrival. The village was bought last year by Beshir Agha, and instead of taking his tithe of the produce, he seized half the harvest, and treated five other villages in Boulanyk in the same way.

Hanzavheikh, one of these villages, was visited by Reza Agha's servants two months ago, who carried off all the sheep and most of the cattle.

Kanakiss, an Armenian village of seventy houses, was visited by Salih Agha, of the Jebranli tribe, in the night. He treated the inhabitants with great cruelty, and exacted bonds from them for the payment of large sums under circumstances of great terror. This money he subsequently collected.

At Teghad, an Armenian village of 150 houses, the oxen were taken last July by the servants of Beshar Agha, while in August during my visit other Kurds commanded by Beshar Agha's brother, Mahmoud Said, carried off 300 sheep. Zaptiehs under a Lieutenant were dispatched by the Kaimakam in pursuit, and succeeded in recovering forty, but the Lieutenant was dangerously wounded in the chest, and is not likely to recover. Mahmoud Said, the culprit, escaped to Khizan, and is visiting the Sheikh of that district, Mohamed Reshid. The Government say they cannot find him, but his movements are no secret, and the Kurds in Khizan told me he was the honoured guest of their principal Sheikh in the Khizan Plain, and was staying at the Tehiez. I informed the Vali and suggested he should take steps to catch him, but his Excellency seemed to think the operation was too difficult, or not worth the trouble. This is a pity, for he is an active brigand, and, as his name figures in most of the plundering operations in Boulanyk, his capture and punishment would have a good effect.

Goyugh, a mixed village containing twenty Armenian and fifty Kurdish houses was plundered in 1895, and any property which the Christians collected after that event was carried off this year by the Jebranli Kurds.

At Khoshgeldi, an Armenian village of seventy houses, the servants of Beshar Agha lately stole 50 oxen and 150 sheep. Complaints were made to Behiadin Pasha, but no attention was paid to the matter.

At Liz, a large Armenian village of 300 houses, half the inhabitants were plundered in 1895, when the Kaimakam of that year was himself in the village. The latter decamped and left the population to their fate, though he had a force of gendarmes with him, and could have repulsed the Kurds. This year Beshar, Khalet, and Reza Aghas visited the village and took the remaining 100 oxen and 150 sheep.

Malasgird.—The Caza of Malasgird, which lies to the east of Boulanyk, is almost entirely Kurdish. There are seventeen Christian and eighty Kurdish villages. The Armenian population numbers approximately 4,500, and that of the Kurds some 20,000 souls. The condition of this district is very similar to that of Boulanyk. The small Armenian population are either plundered freely by their more numerous Kurdish neighbours, or dispossessed of their tenures by powerful Kurdish Chiefs of the ruling tribes. Of these the principal ones are the Hyderanlis, who number some 6,000 fighting men, and the Hassananlis, who have about 3,000. There is an acting Kaimakam, Muri Bey, the Tahrirat Mudir of Mush, who occupies his time with the sale of tithes and the collection of taxes, leaving the political administration of his district in the hands of the Liva, Behiadin Pasha, who has come to Malasgird with a large staff, ostensibly for the purpose of restoring order and quieting the Kurds in the contiguous regions of Malasgird, Boulanyk, and Akhlat.

There seems to be a consensus of opinion among Turks and Armenians as to the undoubted inefficiency of Behiadin Pasha's administration; nor are his dealings above suspicion. From Turkish sources in Malasgird I was informed that he had received 150 liras from Reza Agha to insure his quiescence as regard the latter's actions in Boulanyk and Malasgird, and this information was confirmed by the Vali of Bitlis, who states that Reza Agha had paid as much as 200 liras to the Military Commander when summoned to Bitlis to answer for his misdeeds.

Orders were recently issued for the collection of Hamidieh arms, but the measures adopted by Behiadin Pasha, presumably in accordance with instructions received from the Mushir at Erzingian, for collecting them were so futile that, on the appearance of the gendarmes, who were dispatched for the purpose—the Liva would not send soldiers—Fahttah Bey, a Hamidieh Commander, ordered them to leave his troopers alone, and threatened them with punishment if they persisted in carrying out their instructions, whereupon the gendarmes referred the question to the Military Commander, and the matter was immediately dropped.

Many officers in Malasgird, enraged at the impunity with which Hamidiehs and other Kurds shoot their brother officers, tendered their resignations. The matter was referred to the Mushir for adjustment, and eventually led to a severe reprimand being administered to the officers who had adopted this method of remonstrance. They were told that their complaints against the Hamidiehs were unfounded and ordered to withdraw their resignations. Upon this the officers united with the civil authorities of Boulanyk, headed by Belal Bey, the Kaimakam, and drew up a Mazbata detailing their grievances, and complaining of the unchecked excesses of Hamidieh regiments and Kurdish Notables and their immunity from punishment. I have not heard of the result of this measure, but I understand the Mazbata will be forwarded to Constantinople.

The Porte's directions for the non-sale of village tithes to the Hamidiehs are evaded without difficulty. The latter purchase the tithes in the names of other Kurdish villagers or compel the Armenian peasants to negotiate the transactions on their behalf. The result is that Fatullah Bey, the Hamidieh Commander, who is notorious as a brigand, an oppressor, and an ill-doer, is this year the farmer of many villages, a measure which is diametrically opposed to the orders of the Sublime Porte and the principles embodied in the scheme of Anatolian reforms.

There is at the present moment considerable friction between the Hassananli and the Hyderanli Kurds, and amicable relations are suspended between them. They are constantly fighting and killing one another, their quarrels arising chiefly out of disputed questions concerning their rank and precedence in the various Hamidieh regiments which they compose. There has, however, been no open warfare between the tribes since the spring of 1896, and Behiadin Pasha's mission to Malasgird had the effect of temporarily checking their indiscipline in this respect. But the Hassananlis themselves are now divided into two factions. One party stole the oxen of Reshid Agha, a Major of Hamidieh, and subsequently killed him, and Rezi Agha, taking up the quarrel on behalf of the murdered man, killed two adherents of the opposite party. A blood feud having been thus established, the two factions are preparing for general action, in spite of the Liva's presence, and exercise mutual reprisals after their manner, secretly stealing one another's cattle and murdering each other by stealth whenever a strong man meets a weak one or an armed man one whose equipment is inferior to his own.

As a result of the repeated representations of the Vali of Bitlis two of the more prominent Hamidieh Commanders, Suleiman Agha and Beshar Agha, have been sent to Erzingian to enable the Mushir to inquire personally into the charges against them,

and, while I was in Malasgird, a telegraphic summons was received by Fatullah Bey, ordering his attendance for the same purpose. Reza Agha, whose name elicits terror throughout Akhlat, Bonlanyk, and Malasgird, has also been summoned to Bitlis to answer for his conduct before the judicial authorities in this town. The only benefit derived from this proceeding is that it relieves the three Cazas for a time of his presence. Though complaints are many and his misdeeds admittedly numerous, direct evidence cannot be easily obtained against him in a Court of Justice, as the Armenians, who are the chief sufferers, are naturally unwilling to give adverse testimony to his face, knowing that either he or his adherents, who continue to reside in their midst, would indubitably punish any such admissions with severe penalties on their return to their homes.

Unless, therefore, the Ottoman Government establishes martial law in these districts, or utilizes the troops for the suppression of acts of brigandage, no improvement in the situation can be expected. The Courts are hampered by the rules of their procedure, and the very nature of the offences for which miscreants of the type of Reza Agha are indicted precludes the possibility of a conviction on the evidence forthcoming. The smaller Kurds who have legal cause of complaint against the Aghas will not, out of loyalty to their race and clanly feeling, proceed against them, even if they are aware of the existence of a legal remedy for their grievances, which is doubtful. While the Armenian peasantry, whose wives and daughters have been dishonoured, cattle and property destroyed, and homes rendered desolate, have ceased after the lessons of 1895 and 1896, to regard the Government or the Legislature as their protectors, and know too well that their appearance in Court, or the production by them of evidence against their immediate oppressors, would most surely lead to retaliation more fierce and more merciless than their previous sufferings at the hands of those whom the Government, to please Europe, will willingly convict but never punish.

From a Turkish source I have received the following account of an episode which recently occurred in the district of Malasgird and in which Reza Agha and his brother Fatullah Bey, who is deservedly regarded as the "King" of that country, figure prominently:—

Egho, a prosperous Armenian farmer, of Khanoglou, had betrothed his daughter to a young Armenian of his acquaintance. Reza Agha, advised of the matter, informed the father that his consent was necessary to the union, and accompanied this notification with a demand for 5,000*l* piastres. As the request was not complied with he sent a warning to Egho to desist from the marriage. In the meantime, he searched the country for an Armenian priest to do his bidding, and, after many refusals, one was eventually provided for him by Fatullah Bey. Reza Agha then proceeded himself to Egho's house with his retainers, accompanied by the priest, and announced that he had come to marry the girl to one of his own Armenian servants. The ceremony was performed in spite of the opposition of the girl and her father, and the former was finally abducted by the Reza Agha for his own purposes by force. He kept her some time in his house, and, besides violating, brutally ill-treated her. The girl has now returned to her home, refusing to have anything to do with the husband whom Reza Agha has provided for her and the father has gone mad.

While in Malasgird, I had some conversation with a Kurd who, with his brother, took part in a large cattle raid on the village of Aghig in Akhlat in 1895. He informed me that the affair was organized by Hussein Pasha, of whom he was a servant, and that summonses were sent round by him to all his Hyderanli retainers ordering them to attack and plunder the village. Any refusal to join in these plundering expeditions was, so the Kurd told me, heavily punished. The villages of recalcitrants were robbed, their women violated, and their men beaten and disgraced. Hussein Pasha gave them small reward for their pains, and the bulk of the cattle, amounting to several thousand animals, was distributed by him among his relatives and immediate dependents.

According to Kurdish accounts the reason why the Armenian villages in Akhlat and Bonlanyk were not annihilated in 1896 at the time of the Van disturbances, was because the Kurds feared the approach of Russian troops, and thought the latter were coming to occupy the country. Finding they have not done so the Kurds now express keen regret at having missed their opportunity, and tell the Armenians that they will not fail to avail themselves of the first chance which offers itself of completing the work they have begun.

(Signed) FRANCIS EDWARD CROW.

September 30, 1897.

No. 201.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received November* 8.)

(No. 735.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, October* 31, 1897.

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Jerusalem, commenting on the report that the Sultan has granted autonomy to the Abyssinian Church in Jerusalem.

I have, &c.

(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Enclosure in No. 201.

Consul Dickson to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 51.)

Sir, *Jerusalem, October* 13, 1897.

HAVING noticed in the "Egyptian Gazette" of the 1st instant a telegram, dated Constantinople, the 30th September, stating that the Sultan has accorded autonomy to the Abyssinian Church in Jerusalem, I have the honour to report that I caused inquiries to be made on the subject, but have been informed that the local authorities have, up to the present, received no instructions with reference to this question.

I would, however, venture to submit to your Excellency a few observations on the status of the Abyssinian Church in this city.

The number of Abyssinians now residing in Jerusalem is about 150, most of them being monks attached to the Church and Monastery belonging to their sect. The Superior of the Monastery is a more intelligent and somewhat better educated monk, but the Abyssinians have no Bishop, and they are, taken altogether, an exceedingly poor and ignorant community. They are stated to have had considerable possessions in Jerusalem in former times, amongst which there was a library containing many valuable manuscript books; but this was burnt by order of Ibrahim Pasha, the Egyptian, about the year 1838, during a visitation of the plague, after the last Abyssinian had fallen a victim to the disease. The Abyssinians, however, seem to have been deprived of most of their possessions by the Copts and Armenians, and now there only remains to them the Convent of Deir El-Sultan (their right to which is also disputed) within the city, in the vicinity of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and, outside the city walls, a fine church built principally by contributions from the King of Abyssinia, with a small monastery attached to it, in which about thirty monks reside.

On the meeting of the Council of Chalcedon, in the middle of the fifth century, the Armenians, Syrians, and Copts, of which last the Abyssinians form a part, refused to obey its summons or to accept its dogmas, but have always adhered to the Eutychian, Monophysite, and Monothelite doctrines, which form a bond of spiritual union between them. This community of belief, taken together with the small number of Copts, Abyssinians, and Syrians usually resident in the Holy City, induced the Porte from early times to place these sects under the supervision of the Armenian Patriarch.

In a conversation which I have had with Mgr. Vehabedian, the present Patriarch, he informed me that as far back as the reign of the Sultan Saladin, of Crusades times, the Syrians, Copts, and Abyssinians are mentioned in the Firman granted to the Armenian Patriarch as being under his superintendence, and their affairs have always been treated with the authorities through the Armenian Patriarchate. The Syrians or Jacobites in recent years appointed for themselves a Bishop in Jerusalem who is recognized by the Porte, but their position, with regard to the Armenian Patriarch, remains unaltered, as they are still referred to in his Firman as under his spiritual supervision.

The Abyssinians have always shown very great veneration and respect for Jerusalem and the holy sites, as the Royal Family of Abyssinia claims direct decent from King Solomon, and their Chiefs and Headmen frequently visit the Holy Land as pilgrims. Should, therefore, the Sultan accord them an independent position in this city like the other principal Christian sects, the measure would be extremely gratifying to both the King of Abyssinia and the nation. It is asserted that this step, if actually taken by the Sultan, has been decided upon at the initiative of Russia, who of late is

reported to be making efforts for the conversion of the Abyssinians to the Greek Orthodox faith, and to bring them under her influence; and she would probably, later on, ask that the Abyssinians in Jerusalem should be placed under her protection. Under any circumstances this move on the part of the Sultan, if correctly reported, will not only be very flattering to the Abyssinian nation, but would, at the same time, by withdrawing the Abyssinians from under the superintendence of the Armenian Patriarch, be a blow aimed against the power and influence of the Armenian community in this city.

I have, &c.
(Signed) JOHN DICKSON.

No. 202.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received November 15.)

(No. 738. Confidential.)
Constantinople, November 8, 1897.
My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Smyrna, respecting the movements of Turkish troops in his Consular district.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 202.

Consul Cumberbatch to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 104. Confidential.)
Smyrna, October 30, 1897.
Sir,

WITH reference to my despatch No. 99 Confidential, of the 7th instant, I have the honour to report that 300 horses were shipped on board the Turkish steamer "Shereef Hamm," which left on the 28th instant for Salonica.

Information from the interior shows that the enrolment of recruits is still going on.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. A. CUMBERBATCH.

No. 203.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received November 15.)

(No. 747.)
Constantinople, November 11, 1897.
My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Bitlis, respecting his recent journey through the Caza of Khizan.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 203.

Vice-Consul Crow to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 28.)
Bitlis, October 18, 1897.
Sir,

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith inclosed to your Excellency a report on my journey through the Caza of Khizan in the month of September last.

I have, &c.
(Signed) FRANCIS EDWARD CROW.

Inclosure 2 in No. 203.

Report on a Journey through the Caza of Khizan in September 1897.

THE road from Bitlis to Khizan traverses the Armenian district of Dadig, a nahié of Bitlis. The principal village is Khoultig, with a Christian population of 3,000. The inhabitants fled to the mountains in 1895, and the Kurds plundered the village, leaving nothing but the empty houses behind them. Twenty-four men were killed and sixteen persons, women and children, died of fright.

The villagers were rehabilitated by their friends in Constantinople, and the Relief Commissioner gave them clothes and food. The tithes have been raised this year from 15,000 to 19,000 piastres. From time immemorial they have been harassed by the Kurds of the neighbourhood, headed by one Fazo, who, with his followers, though repeatedly imprisoned in Bitlis, recommence their plundering operations with greater assiduity as soon as they are released.

Near is the Kurdish village of Hauris, the residence of Ali Agha, an exiled Tufenkji from the Palace, who approached me on the subject of a Kurdish revolt in August last, and asked for English aid and sympathy in the movement. He is in close relations with Sheikh Amin, one of the principal Kurds of Bitlis, who, with Haji Nejmeddin and Yahsin Effendi, are alleged to have had a hand in the Madehi disturbances. Ali Agha is a member of the Kurdish ring at Bitlis, who hampered the actions of the Vali, and preached sedition against the Government. Since my refusal to have anything to do with him he has sent me no further communication.

Suchog, on the borders of Khizan, has an Armenian population of 160. At the time of the Bitlis massacres they were untouched, as the Vali sent gendarmes to protect them. Their Kurdish neighbours of Kishtonig and Goot compel them to cultivate their fields without payment. Angaria, or forced labour, is universal throughout the district, and, in fact, in any part of the vilayet where Kurds and Armenians dwell side by side. The tithes were raised this year from 5,000 to 5,500 piastres, as the villagers, finding that their tithe farmer was a bad one, paid an extra 500 piastres to Government to manage the tithes themselves

The zaptiehs detached for the protection of the nahié treat the Christian inhabitants with undue severity and cruelly abuse their powers. Four Armenians were arrested by them in September on a charge of harbouring an ex-political prisoner, a native of Khizan, who had been allowed to return to his village on the expiration of his sentence. They were tied to a pillar by their hands and feet for twenty-four hours and unmercifully beaten with the butts of the zaptiehs' guns, and were then released on payment of 300 piastres and a batman of butter, and came to my camp. Their backs were in a terrible state. There was nothing to justify even the arrest as the ex-prisoner had been released and pardoned. The zaptiehs, hearing they had been to see me, again arrested two of them after my departure, and sent them to Bitlis prison, where they are now in confinement charged with being implicated in the Armenian agitation. I have informed the Vali of the occurrence, and he promises to inquire into the conduct of the zaptiehs. The same men treated other Armenians of Bass in this district in a similar way, beating them and extorting money as the price of their release.

Khizan.

The Caza of Khizan is divided into five cantons or nahiés: Yeghehis, Shinetsor, Spiert, Mamerdan (or Nimran), and Khizan (the centre of Government). The Armenian population, according to Government statistics taken this year, is 7,000. All the Christians in the Caza embraced Islamism in 1895 at the instance of the Khizanli Kurds, and thus saved many lives and were spared much plundering.

They have now, with a few exceptions, reverted to Christianity, but the resentment shown by the more fanatical part of the Kurdish population, towards those who have again become Christians in their immediate vicinity, has induced many families, and, in some cases, whole villages to migrate to other parts of the vilayet, and the premises of the Armenian Mission in Bitlis have from time to time been crowded with numbers of these refugees, who arrive penniless and in rags, and are dependent for their daily subsistence on the funds of the Commission, until the refusal of further assistance or the counsels of their friends causes them to betake themselves to new settlements in localities where they will be less exposed to the outbursts of Mahommedan fanaticism.

Of Kurds there are three tribes, the Khizanli (the indigenous inhabitants of the

Jelaluddin clan), and the Saidanli and Aliganli, both kocher or nomads, who wander about Mamerdan. The former tribe, who are sedentary, were chiefly instrumental in the forced conversion of the Christians to Islamism. The two latter tribes were removed from the Caza by the Government before 1895, owing to complaints made against them by the other inhabitants, both Kurd and Armenian. They were sent to Jezireh, but in 1895, the Government made them Hamidiehs, and, during the disturbances of that year, they returned to their old haunts and attacked the valleys of Yeghehis, Shinetsor, and Mamerdan, committing acts of murder and pillage wherever they were not prevented by the Khizanli Kurds, who protected the Armenians after their conversion. They still remain in Mamerdan.

The name of Sheikh Jelaladdin is famous throughout Khizan. The Khizanli Kurds have adopted this title as a patronymic for their descendants. His tomb on the plains of Khizan is the object of veneration, and the site of pilgrimages from distant provinces. Miracles are attributed to his bones. Bread is distributed to the wayfarer both Mahommedan and Christian who passes through his villages, and the mounted traveller who approaches the Tehié, erected in commemoration of his virtues, is invited to descend from his horse to do honour to his remains. The Shiekh flourished in the seventies, and at the close of the Russo-Turkish War, massacred many Christians of Bayezid after the evacuation of that town by the Russians. For this excess he was summoned to Constantinople by the Sultan under pressure from the Embassies. But his followers, who regarded the Sheikh's person as sacred, and venerated him to the extent of eating the excrements of his body, are said to have poisoned him rather than surrender him to justice. The Sheikh's numerous descendants are most revered. Kurds from distant regions pay them homage, approaching them with the marks of deference due to royalty and retiring from their presence backwards. Regeneration is received by the imposition of their hands. Beards, which they have touched, are allowed to grow, and Solis are erected by these and similar ceremonies.

It is a matter of small wonder that the Armenian peasantry located in the neighbood, and subject to the rule of a fanatical autocracy of this description, should find the conditions of life difficult.

The present head of the clan is Mohamed Rishid, a cousin of Jelaladdin and a man of 30, but the Kurds revere the late Sheikh's son, Said Ali, more. The family are still all powerful throughout Khizan. They are not in the habit of plundering their own immediate districts, but outside it they are under no such restrictions. A man of the present Sheikh's household murdered an Armenian at Ourbel on Lake Van in June, and a message was sent to the villagers that, if evidence were given against the murderer, their villages would be burnt. The peasants accordingly held their tongues, and the man was acquitted. The angaria enacted by the family from the Christian population is heavy but the peasants are fed while they work.

I visited Sheikh Said Ali, the son of Jelaladdin in Mamerdan. He passes the summer in the tents of the Aliganli Kocher Kurds, among the ruins of Ov, situated on the high plateau which divides the valleys of Spiert from those of Mamerdan. Ov was formerly an Armenian village, but was destroyed in 1895. It is now abandoned by the inhabitants, and the fields of the Christians have been appropriated by the Kurds, while their church is used as a shelter for Kurdish cattle.

The Sheikh is an uncouth, uneducated youth of 20; indolent and sensual in appearance, and devoid of the good breeding which distinguishes many of the members of the older Kurdish families. He is very wealthy, and is an object of universal veneration among the members of his own and the neighbouring tribes. He seems too accustomed to receive the homage and adulation of his ignorant adherents to realize his own imperfections, and too confident in his own impeccability to encourage hopes of improvement as he grows older. He even appeared to be wanting in intelligence. If more enlightened his influence might be turned to some account, but much cannot be expected from a man whose training has led him to regard the water in which he has performed his ablutions, as a specific for the ailments of sick children, whose neighbours consider themselves honoured if he cohabits with their wives and whose follies are counted as wisdom among a class of men only more ignorant and degenerate than himself.

Nahié of Yeghehis.

There are eleven Christian villages in Yeghehis, the principal one being Argho, with a population of 120, which is situated close to one of the Jelaladdin villages. The inhabitants of the valley are the vassals of their Kurdish neighbours, and plough their

fields and give them gratuitous labour, in return for which they enjoy such protection as it pleases their self-appointed masters to afford them. All the Christian inhabitants turned Mussulman in 1895, and their lives were saved by Saduk Agha, a Sofi and an adherent of Jelaladdin, who protected the population, after their conversion, from the attacks of the Aliganli Kurds. They reverted to Christianity, at the invitation of the Government, in 1896, and now practise their religion undisturbed. They lost all their cattle and property in 1895, but have been unmolested since. The nahié has been relieved from Bitlis and, though poor, they manage to exist.

Nahié of Shinetsor.

The valley of Shinetsor or Dur-i-Mervan, is shut off from the rest of Khizan by high mountains, and contains sixteen Armenian villages, which were all plundered by the Aliganli Kurds in 1895, and seventeen men were killed. They have been undisturbed since. At the instance of the Jelaladdin tribe they embraced Islamism in a body in 1895 and so saved their lives. In 1896 they reverted to Christianity with the rest of Khizan. There are Kurdish watchmen in most of the villages, and the inhabitants speak well of their Kurdish neighbours, who do not now interfere with their religion. Nuri Bey, the former Kaimakam, who is at present Acting Mutessarif at Saird, appears to have behaved well, and recovered such plunder as was possible from the Kurds, inviting the Armenians to identify their property, and causing all they recognised to be restored.

The plundering of 1895 was not confined to the Armenians and the Kurdish Agha of Permashen, who protected the Christian villages, lost all his sheep when the Aliganli Kurds pillaged the valley.

The Jelaladdin Kurds only extended their protection to these villages on condition they became Mussulman, and the Aliganlis were given a free hand until this condition was fulfilled; hence the Armenians lost all they possessed. Relief has been given in the valley and, though very poor, the villagers are not worse off than their co-religionists in other parts of Khizan. Their isolated position and the physical difficulties which impede ready access to their villages, protect them from the daily annoyance and extortions, which their more exposed countrymen in the plain experience at the hands of the Jelaladdin family.

Nahié of Spiert.

There are twenty-five Armenian and twenty Kurdish villages in Spiert. The Beys resident in the district protect their Christian neighbours, and I heard no complaints against them. The nahié seems to have suffered less during the disturbances of 1895, than any other part of the Vilayet of Bitlis. Of the twenty-five Christian villages eleven only became Mussulman and have since reverted, while the rest were unmolested; and the proportion plundered does not exceed two or three. Those attacked suffered indeed, heavily, as eighteen men were killed in the small village of Janghan alone, and seven in another. The exemption of the nahié from entire forced conversion and universal pillage is difficult to explain, but they were probably visited at the end of the disturbances, when the agents of destruction, having grown weary of the business, did not complete their work as thoroughly as elsewhere. Their escape is due more to good luck than any thing else.

These villages had many men in Constantinople before the disturbances, but they have now been obliged to return to their homes. Cultivation is very restricted, owing to the nature of the ground, and the villagers were mainly dependent on the earnings of their bread-winners in Constantinople for support, and the payment of their taxes. The great poverty now noticeable in all Armenian villages, not merely in Khizan, but throughout the vilayet, is largely due to the prohibition by the Government of what is known here as "Courbet," namely, emigration to other parts of the Empire or abroad, where the young and able-bodied portion of the Armenian population could earn money, and supplement the income derived from their fields at home.

In Spiert the Government are still punishing, through the medium of the tax-collector, those who have the misfortune to be related to members of the Revolutionary party. In Tusa, a man, whose brother was killed last year at Van fighting against the Kurds, was visited a few days before my arrival by tax-gatherers, who broke open his house, sold all his grain, and took the proceeds for unpaid tax-arrears. The man is left destitute, and has a family.

From Arakin, a village of five houses, where the inhabitants are in extreme poverty

and five in rags, 400 piastres were taken by selling the grain from their threshing-floors and, but for a timely bribe of 2 mejedichs to the collector, the latter would have raised 600 more.

The priest of Vorük, an old man, was badly beaten in September by tax-collectors, who sold eight of his sheep for 70 piastres, and forty-three godes of wheat for 120 piastres (the market value of the sheep being about 240, and that of the wheat 301 piastres). The reason alleged by the zaptiehs for this severe and unjust treatment was that the old man encouraged Revolutionaries. He seemed absolutely harmless, had not left his village, and has certainly no dealings with the disaffected party.

The only recent plundering I heard of in Spiert was at Godentz, where the Kurds of Moks in Van stole 200 sheep in July last. They have not been recovered.

In the valley of Spiert, of the converted Christians one family alone, numbering some thirty persons, remain Moslems, and this of their own free will.

Nahié of Mamerdan.

In Mamerdan there were twelve Armenian villages, containing 163 families before 1895. After the disturbances 100 families left the district, three turned Mussulman, and sixty Christian families still remain. The whole of the Armenian population embraced Islamism under pressure from Sheikh Moos, cousin of the late Jelaladdin, but with the above exceptions, reverted to Christianity in May 1897. Some of the villages were not plundered; thirty men were killed in 1895, and about 100 of those who left the district perished in the Van massacres of 1896. There is no church or priest in the whole of Mamerdan. Taxes are relaxed having been collected for the first time this year. Tithes have been roughly doubled since the massacres, but are generally sold to the villagers themselves. Complaints against the oppression and extortion practised by the Aliganli Kurds are general. In addition to their obligations to Government the Armenians of this district pay taxes as feudatories to the Aliganlis. The system of payments thus created by these self-constituted owners of the soil is both elaborate and curious.

Some forty years ago Badirkhan Bey, a Kurd of Khizan, revolted, levied taxes from all Armenians in Khizan, placed himself at the head of 40,000 Kurds, strengthened several old fortresses, and held out against the Government; but he was defeated by Osman Pasha and captured in Bohtan. After his subjection and death the custom of levying taxes on the Armenian population was practised by his successors, and the taxes appertaining to Mamerdan finally passed into the hands of a certain Molak's son, who levied a capitation charge of 6 piastres per family, in return for which he protected the Christians. The Armenians were well cared for in those days, and paid the light tax willingly. Six years ago the Molak's son went on a pilgrimage to Medina, and in order to raise money for his journey, sold his taxation rights to the Aliganli Kurds in perpetuity for the sum of 2,500 piastres. The latter then raised the contributions, apportioned the Armenian families among the various Aghas of their tribe, and instituted the practise of purchasing and selling the interest in Armenian settlements which, in spite of the banishment of the tribe by the Government before 1895, has continued ever since.

The regular taxes levied yearly by the Aliganli Aghas from each Armenian family are as follows:

	Value in Piastres (circa)
1 sheep	60
3 [illegible]	60
4 pairs socks	15
1 bale of white cloth	30
Similar woollen stuff	25
3 godes of wheat	10
[illegible]	150
1 head of pears	20
30 days' labour	90
Total	450

In addition to the above, irregular taxes are enforced. Each family pays to its particular Agha 50 piastres in the event of a birth, marriage, or death in the Agha's family, and 20 piastres on the marriage of a daughter in the Armenian's house. When two members of an Armenian family separate, each has to pay 50 piastres, and in the event of the death of either, the property of the descendent, if he has no children, falls to the Agha. If he leaves issue, the Agha takes half, until the children reach an age to pay taxes themselves.

The right of the Turkish Government to appoint Reisses and Moukhtars in the Armenian villages of Mamerdan is apparently not admitted, as the Aghas arrogate to themselves this privilege and eject the Government nominees or refuse to accept them, conferring the appointment on the applicant of their own choice, who, it is needless to say, has supported his candidature by the tender of a substantial present. It is a common practice for a Kurdish Agha, when in want of funds, to sell his interest in an Armenian village or family to another Agha.

In a remote corner of South-Eastern Khizan, bordering on the Bohtan Mountains, and skirted by the river of that name, lies the old Armenian monastery of Surb Hatch or Holy Cross, picturesquely situated on the slopes of the Vanhier Dagh, under the shelter of one of its highest peaks. The monastery, which dates back to the twelfth century, is rich in arable and pasture lands, its corn-fields and meadows, pleasantly wooded, covering many acres of the mountain side down to the edge of the stream at its foot. Poverty and the disordered condition of the country led to the withdrawal of the Vartabed or Episcopal Vicar some six years ago, and an Armenian caretaker and his family were placed in charge of the buildings, and cultivated the lands with the aid of the Armenian peasants of the village of Abarantz, situated within a stone's throw of the monastery. Pilgrimages were made to the building, and special religious services performed within its walls yearly, in the month of September, on a day set apart for that purpose in the Armenian calendar. The monastery and its church are much venerated by the Gregorian community, and in importance it ranks with that of Surb Carapet, in the western extremity of the Mush Plain.

In 1895 Dahar Agha, a Kocher Kurd of the Aliganli tribe, who commands some 200 followers, and was described to me by the Kurds themselves as being the highest brigand of the neighbourhood, took up his quarters in Abarantz, compelled the caretaker and his family to embrace Islamism, and occupied both the monastery and its lands. Similar treatment was accorded to the Christian inhabitants of the village and their church, a fine building capable of containing over 500 persons, was desecrated and turned into a sheep pen.

I visited the monastery and the village on the 23rd September, and found Dahar Agha with five wives and a numerous following in possession. The Armenian caretaker and his family are Mussulman converts, officially recognized by the Government, and continue to occupy their quarters in the monastery, enjoying the protection of Dahar Agha, and sharing with him the profits of the monastery lands. Of the Christian inhabitants of the village, fourteen families, who reverted to their faith, abandoned their homes from fear of Dahar Agha's resentment, and migrated to other parts of the vilayet. Six other families also reverted, but remain in the village and live in abject poverty. Their church is occupied by the sheep of Dahar Agha, and the altar and side chapels filled with animal refuse and "tezek," or cattle dung, and dried for the purpose of winter fuel.

The monastery is occupied by Kurdish families and the converted caretaker. The church and its precincts are turned into a barn for the storage of Dahar Agha's hay and grain, and the altars used as dressers for the accommodation of cooking pots and culinary utensils. The floor of the chancel and the nave are covered with heaps of wheat and barley, and the side aisles blocked with stacks of hay. The vestments, vessels, and other necessaries have been appropriated by the Kurds, and the sacred books and archives partly destroyed, and the remainder given to the Kurdish children to play with.

I was visited by Dahar Agha and certain members of his family. The former, who is a villainous-looking individual, was imprisoned by the Bitlis authorities in 1894 for fighting with other Kurds, but was released or escaped from confinement in 1895, and took a prominent part in the disturbances of that year. He makes his summer quarters at Abarantz, and winters at Olynn, in Khizan. He justified his appropriation of the monastery and lands by saying that they had been abandoned by the Armenians, and that he acts as the protector of the village from the inroads of Kocher Kurds. He made no attempt to excuse his treatment of the village church, and the Christians who remain are compelled to perform their religious ceremonies in their own houses. They are visited by a priest from Spiert, but he is not allowed to use the church.

On hearing of the Bitlis massacre in 1895 Dahar Agha proceeded by night with his followers to Ilnzam, an Armenian village of 200 families in the Sandjak of Saird. He summoned fifty of the chief men, and shut them up in a room, telling them that they had

been delivered into his hands to do as he liked with. "He was their God, and could save or destroy them." On the Armenians resisting he had them all bound and confiscated their arms. He then plundered the village, taking all they possessed.

In Segh seventeen families have abandoned their homes since 1895, and the rest have reverted to Christianity. The Reiss and the Moukhtar were both killed in 1895, and the village plundered.

In Bast, out of fifty converted Armenian families, fifteen only remain, and these still fear to profess Christianity because of the neighbouring Kurd, Mahmoud Agha, who stripped the village in 1895 and stole 1,500 sheep; twenty-four men were killed. The village is now occupied by Kurds, and Sheikh Said Ali, the son of Jelaladdin, proposes to take the lands left vacant by the migration of the thirty-five families.

Nehié of Khizan.

This is the centre of Government, and the residence of the Kaïmakam and the Jelaladdin family. There are six Armenian villages, which were plundered in 1895 by the indigenous Kurds. They all became Mussulman, under pressure from Sheikh Hassan, but have reverted to Christianity, with a few exceptions, at the invitation of Government. About forty Christian families, finding the conditions of life unbearable in the vicinity of the Tehié, migrated immediately after their reversion, which was opposed by the Sheikh, in consequence of the latter's threats. The present representative, Sheikh Mohammed Reshid, holds the same views, and his treatment of Christians is eminently unsatisfactory, especially as regards the villages in his immediate neighbourhood, where he does as he likes with the inhabitants, and exacts "angaria" both from men and women.

In spite of the plundering and their reduced condition, the tithes of the Armenian villages have been doubled since 1895. The military tax alone has been waived. Complaints against the Sheikh and his adherents were universal.

The Jelaladdin family are all powerful here, and could by their influence have averted the wholesale destruction and plunder of the Christian villages in 1895. In Khizan Plain fifteen Christians were killed. Conversion to Islamism was the *sine qua non* of Kurdish clemency, and the Sheikhs of the Tehié headed the movement.

There were three Gregorian monasteries in existence before the disturbances.

A Vartabed and a priest were killed, the monastery of Yat Khoran (seven temples) blown up with gunpowder by the Kurds, that of Surb Gamadiel partially destroyed, the sacred books, archives, and other property being burnt and the cattle annexed, and that of Surb Hatch occupied by Dahar Agha, as related above.

The Christian population of Hegon and Andeutz has been reduced from eighteen families to four, the rest having migrated, and those who remain living in great poverty.

Hobantz has been entirely abandoned.

In Darantz, near the Tehié, there are twenty-seven Christian families. Sheikh Reshid makes his summer camp in their fields, and the village suffers much from the destruction by them and their animals of its lands and property. The compulsory labour exacted from this village is particularly heavy. Haji Kerim Khan Bey, of Cara Su (the seat of the Kaïmakam), has appropriated nearly fifty of their fields during the past six years, and compels the villagers to cultivate them for him. The house of the Armenian Reiss was like a Government Audience Chamber, filled with Kurds; one demanding forage for his horses and food for his servants, another requisitioning "angaria" for the Tehié, and another urging speedy compliance with his own and other people's demands. They take all they want and pay for nothing.

In the village of Prontz complaints were numerous against the Sheikh and also against Khalid Bey, a Kurd of the village. Sheikh Mahommed Reshid coveted a pair of buffaloes belonging to one Zozan, an Armenian peasant, and did not scruple to ask for them. As the request was not complied with, the Sheikh sent his servants to burn Zozan's threshing-floor, and all the latter's wheat was destroyed. The authorities imprisoned the servant who had executed the Sheikh's orders, and directed the payment of compensation. The Kurd was released a few weeks later, but no attention has been paid to the order for compensation.

It will need some more powerful deterrent than that likely to be afforded by any legislative nostrums in order to curb the sentiments of the Kurds in Khizan and Mamerdan, which now find expression in the daily injury and ill-treatment of their Christian neighbours; for, apart from the question of religious antagonism and the code

of belief, which leads them to regard the lives of those converts to Islam who have reverted to Christianity as the legitimate forfeits of apostasy, the unbounded licence which the Kurds have enjoyed in their dealings with the Armenian peasantry during the twenty years which have elapsed since the Russo-Turkish war, renders any *modus vivendi* impossible for the latter in these districts. If, as would not be difficult, facilities could be given them for leaving their homes and settling elsewhere, they would benefit by the change, and the Kurd would not be a gainer, as, whether nomad or sedentary, he has no farming instincts, and is entirely dependent on the "fellah" for keep and advice in the cultivation of his land.

(Signed) FRANCIS EDWARD CROW.

Bitlis, October 18, 1897.

No. 204.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received November* 15.)

(No. 748.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, November* 11, 1897.

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Bitlis, respecting the murder recently committed at Sairt, together with a Memorandum which I have caused to be prepared on the subject, and the substance of a telegram from Mr. Crow.

I am sending a *pro memoria* to the Sublime Porte in connection with this affair.

I have, &c.

(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 204.

Vice-Consul Crow to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 31.)

Sir, *Sairt, October* 29, 1897.

I HAVE the honour to report to your Excellency that I arrived in Sairt on the 21st instant, and have received the following information regarding the murder of Yusuf Yunan and the trial of the murderers.

Six days before his death Yusuf Yunan received a group of £ T. 200 by post. About the same time orders came to the Sairt authorities, instructing them to forward a considerable sum to Bitlis. The money was not forthcoming, and the Assistant Public Prosecutor endeavoured to borrow £ T. 200 from Yusuf Yunan, who refused to give it. This refusal led to a quarrel between them, which was finally patched up by the Mutessarif. The Assistant Public Prosecutor, who has a deplorable reputation, is stated by the police to have threatened Yusuf Yunan, and is believed by them to have instigated the murderers.

The men charged with the murder were tortured in prison, being beaten and suspended by their necks, and finally admitted the crime, giving all the details and circumstances under which it was perpetrated, but denying the existence of money. On their admission, which was confirmed by the discovery in their houses of the weapons employed, they were condemned to 15 years' imprisonment.

After the Judgment had been given certain wives and mothers of the condemned men, accompanied by the brother of one Abdullah, the leader of the band, proceeded to Constantinople and solicited the intercession of the Validé-i-Sultan on behalf of their relatives. This was granted, and they informed their friends at Sairt, by letters, that the Judgment had been reversed and that they hoped the condemned men would be speedily released.

The Judgment was, in fact, found defective by the Court of Cassation, and the case returned to Sairt for a fresh trial. On this the brother of Abdullah purchased £ T. 200 worth of goods in Constantinople, returned to Sairt, and has opened a well-stocked shop.

The case, which has been reopened, is now said to be delayed pending the arrival of witnesses who have been summoned from Mush. The former declarations given by the condemned men have been annulled and fresh statements taken from them, to the effect that the murder was committed by Christians. The prisoners claim that their former admissions were extracted under torture, and now deny what they previously said.

The general opinion in the town is that the Judgment will be quashed and the men acquitted. On the other hand I hear from officials, who assisted in the arrest and examination of the accused, that the sentence has been upheld by the Court of Cassation, and that the points, on which the case is returned for revision, only regard minor details of the evidence.

The Acting Mutessarif, who has recently come to Siirt, has no cognizance of the affair.

The female relatives of the prisoners are still at Constantinople soliciting the good offices of the Validé-i-Sultan.

I am informed that the condemned men own property consisting of vineyards, gardens, fields, and several houses.

The Representative of the widow and the Relief Committee is expected in Siirt on the 24th instant.

I have, &c.
(Signed) FRANCIS EDWARD CROW.

Inclosure 2 in No. 204.

Memorandum on Case of Youssouf Yohnn.

MR. WAUGH reported on the 18th April last that the murderers had been condemned to death.

Mr. Stavrides was instructed to watch for the arrival of the dossier at the Court of Cassation and see that justice was done.

On the 14th May, 1897, a note was addressed to the Porte claiming the money in Youssouf's possession at the time of the murder (only 30*l.* having been recovered).

On the 13th July the Vali of Bitlis was instructed to spare no effort in finding the remainder of the money, and failing it to sell the property of the murderers.

On the 6th September Mr. Crow telegraphed that no money had yet been recovered, and that the property of the murderers had not yet been sold.

On the 3rd October Mr. Crow telegraphed that on the 16th August the Court of Cassation found the Judgment defective and returned it for a new trial. He added that the Vali stated that the orders issued by the Porte for the sale of the murderers' property will not be executed unless Mr. Andrus of Mardin or his Agent apply to the Court. Proceedings for the sale were meanwhile suspended.

On the 11th October Mr. Crow reported that the new trial had begun and that Mr. Andrus' Agent was going to Siirt. He asked if a Consular Representative should be sent, and was told in reply that this was not necessary unless Mr. Crow should think it essential.

Inclosure 3 in No. 204.

Vice-Consul Crow to Sir P. Currie.

(Telegraphic.) *Siirt, November 5, 1897.*

SIMILAR sentence for murder of an Armenian Priest same day quashed by Cassation and prisoners released a month ago.

No. 205.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received November 15.)

(No. 749.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, November 11, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Kharput, respecting the arrival and distribution of Mauser rifles and ammunition at that town.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 205.

Vice-Consul Fontana to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 40.)
Sir, *Kharput, October 27, 1897.*

WITH reference to my despatch to your Excellency No. 42, of the 8th ultimo, reporting the distribution of Mauser rifles to the troops at Arabkir and Malatia, I now have the honour to report that 110 waggons arrived here some days ago from Samsoun, laden with 2,000 Mausers and a part of the ammunition appertaining thereto. These rifles are for the use of five battalions (400 being assigned to each), viz.:—

The "Nishanji" or Rifle Battalion stationed at Kharput and belonging to the 19th "Firka" or Division;

Two battalions of regular troops now at Van, one of which is stated to be the 2nd Battalion of the 73rd Regiment;

Two battalions of Local Reserves, one "Redif," and the other "Mukadem," of which the latter is now at Khan-Keni.

The men of the Rifle Battalion referred to have already received their allotment of 400 rifles, the distribution of which was performed by the Liva, Mustapha Pasha, who is now acting as Ferik of the whole Division, in the presence of the Civil and Military authorities at Mezreh. The ceremony concluded with a speech to the troops and prayers for the Sultan. The remaining 1,600 Mausers are to be held in reserve, for the present, at the military depôt, pending their distribution to the four other battalions specified here above.

I am informed that a further consignment of cartridges to complete the ammunition of the 2,000 Mausers is now on the way here from Samsoun.

I have, &c.
(Signed) RAPHAEL A. FONTANA.

No. 206.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received November 15.)

(No. 750.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, November 11, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Bitlis, respecting the plundering recently committed by Kurds in that vilayet.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 206.

Vice-Consul Crow to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 30.)
Sir, *Bitlis, October 18, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to confirm my telegram No. 68 of the 12th instant, informing your Excellency that the plundering on the road had interrupted the wheat supply of Bitlis, and that the price of wheat was doubled in the town.

On the 8th October the Hassananlis stole 300 sheep from Tedvan, but they were subsequently recovered by friendly Kurds.

On the 9th October two big wheat caravans from Boulanik and Akhlat were robbed near Tedvan by Hassananlis, who carried off 100 animals and the sacks, and scattered the wheat.

Last year the mules of Sheikh Amin, a Kurd of this town, were stolen by Hassananlis in Boulanik.

On the 13th October 400 sheep were stolen by Hassananlis from Zugagh in Akhlat, and an Armenian, who went in pursuit of them, was shot through the lungs, and died subsequently; 200 of his sheep were recovered later by friendly Kurds.

On the same date, eight more oxen were stolen from Kidzevagh in Akhlat by Kurds.

On the 15th October eight wheat-caravans, which endeavoured to come through to Bitlis from Akhlat and Boulanik, were plundered by Hydernulis near Mount Nimrod. About 200 animals were stolen. Zaptiehs were dispatched in pursuit of the robbers, but the latter opened fire, and put the zaptiehs to flight.

The above disturbances have cleared the air. The wheat is now coming into the town, and the price has fallen from 11 piastres to 9 piastres per gode. It should be 6 piastres.

A member of the Council of Administrations informs me that so many petitions are received daily by the authorities from the victims of plundered villages and caravans, that they have lost all count of them.

No exit from the vilayet is allow to Armenians.

Merchants are prevented from proceeding to Constantinople, or even neighbouring towns, to attend to their business; servants from resuming their employment in other localities; wives from rejoining their husbands; and those who are unable to earn a living in this province from seeking work elsewhere.

I learn that Reza Agha, the Hamidieh officer, who is the cause of a large part of the disturbances in Boulanik and Malasgird, and who was summoned to Bitlis to take his trial, has received a telegram from Zeki Pasha to the effect that he is free to return to his home. The authorities either cannot or will not punish him, and the Vali informs me that, failing conviction before the Tribunals, his proposal to remove him from Malasgird has been overruled by Zeki Pasha.

I have, &c.
(Signed) FRANCIS EDWARD CROW.

No. 207.

Sir H. Rumbold to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received November* 15.)

(No. 381.)
Vienna, November 12, 1897.

My Lord,

COUNT GOLUCHOWSKI referred yesterday to the affair of the expulsion some weeks ago from Mersina of the agent of the Austrian Lloyd Navigation Company, Brazzafoli. He said that the satisfaction promised to the Austrian Embassy in the name of the Sultan himself, and, as I understood his Excellency to say, of His Majesty's own initiative, had not only been not yet granted, but that Brazzafoli, on his returning from Alexandria on the strength of the assurances given, had been attacked on landing by the local authorities, the Austro-Hungarian flag itself having been treated with indignity on that occasion. His Excellency said that, in addition to a suitable apology, the Embassy had been instructed to demand some severe measures against the Vali of Adana. Meanwhile the "Leopard," of the Imperial and Royal Navy, has been ordered to Mersina.

It is explained in a telegram published to-day, that the ill-feelings of the Ottoman local authorities were roused by Brazzafoli's humane action in saving a number of fugitive Armenians from Moslem fanaticism by allowing them reduced fares in the Lloyd steamers. These fugitives, it is stated, included no persons condemned or accused, and there could therefore be no question of political intrixtion on the part of the Austrian Lloyd's agent.

The ground on which he was suspected and persecuted was his having received a sum of 6,000 fr. sent anonymously by an Armenian Committee of Succour, which amount was claimed by an Armenian resident of Mersina.

I have, &c.
(Signed) HORACE RUMBOLD.

No. 208.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received November* 20.)

(No. 647.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, November* 20, 1897, 5·20 P.M.

I HAVE received a telegram from Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum, dated the 16th instant, informing me that great activity is visible in his vilayet both in moving troops and transport, that the measures taken appear to point to the concentration near Mush of a force of 20,000 men, and that these preparations are attributed to the apprehension of a Russian invasion in the spring.

In reply, I have this day sent the following telegram to Mr. Consul Graves, giving the result of a confidential inquiry which I caused to be made on the subject at the Ministry of War:—

"The report of a concentration of troops at Mush, in apprehension of a Russian invasion, is denied by the Minister of War, who states that the concentration of troops at Erzeroum is designed to perfect the mobilizing power and general organization of the 4th Army Corps, for which purpose a regiment will be sent there from Sivas, and six battalions from Van. It appears that 100,000 Mauser rifles, with their ammunition, are being dispatched to the Commander-in-chief at Erzingian."

No. 209.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received November* 20.)

(No. 649.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, November* 20, 1897, 6 P.M.

CROW, Acting Consul at Bitlis, telegraphed yesterday from Siirt as follows:—

"Yussuf Yunan murder case.

"No change has occurred. The Mutessarif positively assures me that the prisoners will not escape punishment. The Court is still awaiting the depositions of one of the witnesses. The case will continue to be watched by the Relief Agent, who remains at Siirt. I am returning to Bitlis to-morrow."

I am continuing to press the matter here.

No. 210.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received November* 22.)

(No. 752.)
Constantinople, November 13, 1897.

My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Jeddah respecting the state of affairs in the Vilayet of the Hedjaz.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 210.

Consul Devey to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 96.)
Jeddah, Arabia, October 26, 1897.

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to report, with reference to my despatch No. 90 of the 12th instant, that his Excellency the Vali remains at Tayif for the present, where he is energetically pushing on the construction of the large barracks begun a few months back; it is said that he has advanced £T. 5,000 from his private purse for this purpose, as funds are sadly lacking in this province, and even many of the higher functionaries get their salaries very irregularly.

Ahmed Ratib Pasha will probably visit Jeddah after a few weeks, and I trust may then give his attention to the urgent need of a telegraph line from here to Yambo and Medina.

On the 16th instant the gun-boat "Nianiet" left this port in order to carry supplies to the small garrisons scattered between here and Acaba; and she carried two or three Sheikhs who were proceeding to Yambo to try and induce the Bedouins to allow passage of provisions from that port to Medina. I have not yet learnt the result of any of their efforts.

I am informed that the Grand Shereef is about to visit the tribes in this neighbourhood, and that his Highness proposes to capture the parties guilty of the

outrage on Consuls in 1895; but as to this matter I would beg respectfully to refer your Excellency to correspondence in 1895, Acting Consul Alban's No. 80 of the 28th October in particular.

I have, &c.
(Signed) G. P. DEVEY.

No. 211.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received November 22.)

(No. 755.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, November* 18, 1897.

WITH the approach of winter the need of relief for the destitute Armenians in the Asiatic provinces of the Ottoman Empire becomes very urgent, while its distribution is, from various causes, a matter of considerable difficulty.

It appears, from reports which I have received from Her Majesty's Consular Representatives in the districts affected, difficult to form any accurate estimate of the number of persons likely to require relief, or of the sum which will be needed for the purpose of affording it.

The number requiring help depends not only on the degree of severity of the winter, but also on the extent to which the villagers may have been deprived of their meagre resources by the more or less strict collection of current taxes and arrears of taxes, and on the amount of the depredation which has been committed by the Kurds during the past autumn.

The condition of the peasantry in the Vilayet of Van was described in the month of August as tolerable and even hopeful; and in September it was considered probable that not more than 500 children and helpless people would have to be fed and clothed during the five winter months. It was estimated that a sum of £T. 2 per head would be required for this purpose, making a total of £T. 1,000. It now appears, however, that the amount of distress has been considerably underrated, and a further large influx of destitute people from the villages to the town is expected. This is owing to the depredations by Kurds, the badness of the harvest, and the continued collection of the taxes by the Government in spite of the poverty of the inhabitants.

£T. 1,000 has already been allotted to this province by the Relief Committee here, but it is now reported that the amount required will be at least £T. 5,000, as the immediate purchase of grain is absolutely necessary.

In the Vilayet of Bitlis the harvest has been generally good, but owing to the inadequate measures taken by the Government to check the wholesale burning and plundering by Kurds in certain districts, it seems probable that the entire population of several villages will have to be maintained during the whole winter. Even where the inhabitants had profited by a good harvest and general tranquillity, they have in many cases been forced to leave their homes owing to the persecution they suffer at the hands of their Kurdish neighbours, who resent their return to Christianity, though it has been authorized by the Government.

It is estimated that about 4,000 persons will have to be supported for twenty-two weeks, at a cost of 1 piastre per head per week, and that about £T. 1,700 will be required for the purpose, of which, in October, about £T. 1,160 was still in hand. This estimate, however, will prove quite inadequate if the present conditions are aggravated by a severe winter.

In the Province of Erzeroum several hundred persons were rendered homeless and destitute in the month of September owing to disastrous fires at Garmerik and Erzinghian. The funds available on the spot being exhausted, the Relief Committee here allotted £T. 100 for the purpose of assisting them, and have now assigned a further sum of £T. 300 for the purchase of grain for the Kighi district.

In the Kharput district the harvest has been for the most part good; but in the opinion of Dr. Gates, a missionary residing there, it is impossible to foresee the amount of real distress for the present, since any inquiry on the subject would be sure to give rise to much misrepresentation on the part of the villagers. It is therefore proposed to defer any steps till the moment when assistance comes to be urgently needed. At the same time, a rough estimate has been made of probable requirements, and £T. 4,000 has been named as the sum likely to be expended, of which the greater part would be devoted to these districts, where the peasants have been, from various causes, prevented from sowing much corn.

A sum of £T. 2,500 has been allotted by the Relief Committee for this object.

Of the £T. 2,500 asked for in the Vilayet of Diarbekir, £T. 500 has been granted by the Committee.

It will be seen from the accounts of the Relief Committee, made up to the end of last month, copy of which I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith,* that the sum of £T. 1,357·01, which still remains unappropriated, is quite insufficient for the alleviation of such deep and widespread distress; so that unless further funds are forthcoming from some source or other, the condition of the districts affected cannot fail to be very serious by the end of the winter.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

No. 212.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received November 29.)

(No. 759.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, November* 19, 1897.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 755 of yesterday, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Van respecting the distress prevalent in the Shatakh district of that province, and the bad outlook for the winter in the whole of that region.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 212.

Captain Elliot to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 54.)
Sir, *Van, November* 2, 1897.

I HAVE the honour to report that I have recently returned from a visit to Shatakh, a mountain district in the southern part of this vilayet.

The condition of the Armenian villages there is bad, and, as the winter advances, I apprehend that much suffering and loss of life will occur.

Already, in some of the villages, the people are in actual want of food and clothing, and much sickness, especially among the children and weaker people, is the result. The unhealthy and wretched appearance of even the strongest is noticeable.

The food supply in most of the villages is, according to all accounts, quite inadequate, varying from two or three months in those best off down to a few days. The harvest is eight months off. For five, if not more of these, the country is deep under snow, and communication, even by pack animals, is impossible. Travellers on foot get through with difficulty.

The people have been robbed of nearly all they possess. Villages where once there were several thousand sheep have now none. They are thus unable to renew their clothing. Many are nearly naked. Milk, cheese, and such like, which form a great part of the people's food, are in most places unobtainable. Millet and walnuts are, as far as I could see, all that most of them had to eat. The Kurds were coming almost daily and carrying off even these poor supplies, and the Government officials were collecting the taxes with the usual brutality.

Two hundred and fifteen relief cattle were distributed in this district. None of these have so far been touched, but the grain, the result of their labour, has mostly disappeared.

I have made representations to the Vali, but fear it is now too late for much to be done. Had the people been protected from Kurdish exactions, it is probable that the greater number would have been able to get through the winter without assistance.

As it is now, it is estimated that out of thirty-four Armenian villages in the caza, the greater part of the inhabitants of thirty will require assistance.

Already destitute villagers are coming into Van. All parts of the vilayet are not so bad as the above, but the general state of the country is much worse than I antici-

*Not printed.

pated before last August. The moving to and fro of troops, caused by the late disturbances, the exactions of the Kurds when they found there was no one to call them to account, and the disappointing harvests, have all contributed to this result.

I cannot but think that the baneful influence of Zekki Pasha is almost entirely the cause of the present unsatisfactory state of affairs. Had Shemski Pasha not been interfered with, the Armenian villagers would have escaped the greater part of their present troubles. It must also be remembered that the Armenian revolutionists were the first disturbers of the more hopeful outlook that existed in July.

The Muraklus called on me the other day, and informed me that two-thirds of the Armenian population were ready to perish, and that £T. 20,000 was needed to meet the coming distress.

These figures were, I believe, arrived at by his Mejlis, after some consideration and discussion.

I consider this a somewhat liberal estimate. It is impossible to form at present anything like a just idea of what will actually be required.

There is but little room to doubt that there will be a very large influx of destitute villagers this winter, and that whatever money may be forthcoming will have to be spent in the unsatisfactory manner of feeding the idle.

I have, &c.
(Signed) G. S. ELLIOT.

No. 213.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received November 20.)

(No. 762.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, November 20, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum respecting the conflict between the Governor-General of that vilayet and the Mushir commanding the troops in the province.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 213.

Consul Graves to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 40.)
Sir, *Erzeroum, November 1, 1897.*

IT is just a year since, in reporting to your Excellency in my despatch No. 109 of the 29th October, 1896, on the execution of reforms, I was able to state that, notwithstanding the fact that no special steps were being taken to carry out the engagements of the Turkish Government, yet, thanks to the efforts of the Vali Raouf Pasha in the way of ordinary administration, it might safely be said that the state of this vilayet compared favourably with that of the surrounding provinces; and I took the opportunity of pointing out the principal difficulties with which he had to contend, namely:—

1. The bankrupt condition of the Treasury.
2. The hostile attitude of the Mushir Zekki Pasha.
3. The failure of the Porte to give effect to reasonable recommendations of the Vali.
4. The continued activity of Armenian revolutionary agents.

In reviewing the present condition of the province, it is only under the last head that I am able to record any improvement. In the course of the year there has been but one invasion of the Erzeroum frontier by a small revolutionary band, besides a few arrests on charges of smuggling arms, and this marked improvement is undoubtedly due to the Vali's sound policy, coupled with the liberal spirit in which effect was given locally to the Amnesty of December 1896.

In all other respects the impediments to good government have increased to such an extent that Raouf Pasha, in spite of his gallant struggle in the cause of law and order, is gradually losing ground, and the Erzeroum Vilayet seems in a fair way to be

submerged, like Van and Bitlis, in the rising flood of bankruptcy, Kurdish lawlessness, and anarchy.

The financial outlook is growing daily more hopeless. I believe that I am within the mark in saying that their is now a deficit of £T. 100,000 in the accounts of the current year of this vilayet, due almost entirely to the crushing military charges, which absorb nearly three-quarters of the provincial revenues. Trade is stagnant, agriculture is suffering heavily from the severities of the tax-collectors, who are even exacting the payment, with arrears, of the military exemption tax, the remission of which for a term of two years was announced a few months ago as a notable concession to the Christian population, while it is needless to add that the gendarmerie remain unpaid, and are gradually losing all semblance of an organized force.

The Mushir Zekki Pasha, after obtaining the dismissal of Shemseddin Bey, the Vali of Van, the withdrawal of his military command from Shemski Pasha, and the removal from Erzeroum of Zia Pasha, has succeeded in driving Ibrahim Bey from his post of Governor of Bayazid. Two of the three sandjaks composing the Vilayet of Erzeroum are thus governed by his tools, and Raouf Pasha is practically reduced to the position of a Mutessarif of the Erzeroum Sandjak alone, and crippled even there by the hostility of the military authorities. Hamidieh officers have been forbidden by circular to appear before the civil authorities when sent for without the Mushir's previous consent. Commanders of troops are encouraged to dun the Civil Governors for ever-growing military requirements, and to treat them insolently when refused: and Zekki Pasha does not hesitate to deny officially the truth of the Vali's reports on the subject of all complaints against the Kurds.

Raouf Pasha now knows better than to expect any assistance from the Porte, or even attention to his reasonable suggestions. His direct appeals to the Sultan have resulted, it is said, in assurances of His Majesty's esteem and regard, but in nothing more substantial. But though he is too proud a man to bring his complaints to foreign Consuls, or to endeavour to enlist the support of the Embassies at Constantinople through them, it becomes their duty, at the risk of incurring his resentment for what he might qualify as interference in the internal affairs of his government, to draw attention to the gravity of the Kurdish question, which has begun to assume so menacing an aspect, and to contrast the policy of Zekki Pasha, who has done so much to create it, with that of Raouf Pasha, who only requires to be vested with due authority to reduce it to its real proportions.

Zekki Pasha, and a clique of military advisers of the Sultan, chief of whom have been Shakir Pasha and the late Dervish Pasha, have, for purposes of their own, built up a beautiful fiction on the subject of the Kurd tribes, which His Imperial Majesty is, no doubt, glad to believe, and which it will therefore be difficult to destroy. This is to the effect that the Kurds are a gallant and warlike race, personally devoted to the Sultan, though impatient of ordinary civil control; that their misdeeds in the way of rapine are grossly exaggerated by the civil authorities and in foreign Consular reports; and that to allow the said civil authorities to use repressive measures towards them would perhaps result in a civil war of great difficulty and doubtful issue. But if, on the other hand, the control of the Kurds be left to Zekki Pasha, they will not only remain faithful to the throne, but will furnish a splendid contingent of some 30,000 cavalry to serve as the first line of defence of the Empire in Asia and as a counterpoise to the "rebellious" Armenian population.

The opinion of every honest Turkish official, as well as of every resident European in the country, would be somewhat as follows: That the Kurds are a barbarous and somewhat cowardly folk, wanting in cohesion among themselves, and incapable of contributing seriously to the defence of the Empire. They dislike the Turks, and have no feeling of personal loyalty for the Sultan; but the quieter majority of them would gladly accept his rule if it were just and firm, and protected them from the turbulent minority. Unfortunately, during the past six years, everything has been done to favour that minority. The most notorious malefactors have been appointed officers of Hamidieh regiments, and brigandage on an unheard of scale has been organized and legitimized under the protection of the Sultan's uniform. They have been placed beyond the reach of the civil law, which they defy with impunity, and, by their raids and inter-tribal feuds, are reducing the country to a desert. Things have not, however, gone so far but that they might be amended by energetic action taken in time. The Kurd is very quick in recognizing his master, and yields at once to consistent firmness; and it would suffice to punish, in an exemplary fashion, some twelve or fifteen of the worst offenders, in order to restore tranquillity throughout the disordered districts, and that without the slightest danger of armed resistance, or the

necessity for adding one battalion to the number of regular troops now quartered therein. The more orderly section of the Kurdish population are already petitioning the Government to protect them with regular troops, without which they declare that they can no longer safely visit their summer pastures, and the Government would have their support in any measures directed towards the suppression of disturbance.

It is only logical to conclude that the present intention is to sacrifice Raouf Pasha to the vanity and ambitions of the Mushir, as every Vali and Mutessarif in eastern Anatolia who has incurred his displeasure has been sacrificed for years past. But the issue is so important that it should be put clearly on record, namely, that the Sultan decides definitely to abandon all attempts at a salutary and remedial policy, and to confide the fortunes of these distracted provinces to the tender mercies of the man who, next to His Majesty himself, has been mainly responsible for all the misfortunes which have recently befallen them; for discontent and sedition among the Armenians, for the fashioning of the Hamidieh scourge, for the moral and material ruin of the country, and its depopulation by massacre, famine, and emigration.

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. W. GRAVES.

No. 214.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received November 29.*)

(No. 770.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, November 24, 1897.*

IN the month of September last Mr. Gordon Bennett, the proprietor of the "New York Herald," visited Constantinople on board his yacht.

Mr. Bennett, who was already a *persona grata* at Yildiz, owing to the strong Turcophil tendencies of his paper, met with marked civility at the hands of the Turkish authorities, and was received in private audience by the Sultan.

I am informed that on that occasion His Majesty proposed that the "New York Herald" should send a Commissioner to inquire into a report on the state of affairs in Anatolia, and the causes and effects of the recent disturbances in those parts. His Majesty is said to have suggested that this mission should be confided to Mr. Whitman, but Mr. Bennett pointed out that it would be better to appoint some man whose name had, in the eyes of the newspaper-reading public, been less prominently connected with Turkish affairs, and said that he would send Dr. Hepworth instead.

Dr. Hepworth started a few days ago for Trebizond, but the fact that he is accompanied by Mr. Whitman, two Aide-de-camps, and other Ottoman officials, renders it probable that he will find considerable difficulty in obtaining impartial information.

I have, however, instructed our Consuls at Trebizond and Erzeroum to do their best, without attracting attention, to put before Dr. Hepworth a true statement of the facts of the case.

Mr. Longworth informs me that he has done so, but appears doubtful as to the result of his efforts.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

No. 215.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received November 29.*)

(No. 771.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, November 25, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Kharput, respecting the financial condition of that vilayet.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 215.

Vice-Consul Fontana to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 50.)
Sir, *Kharput, November 2, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to report to your Excellency the following information which I have received from a Turkish official occupying one of the most important posts in the Local Government, regarding the present financial condition of the vilayet in general:—

For months past telegrams have been received from the Palace and the Ministry of Finance conveying urgent demands for money to be sent to Constantinople. These demands have been complied with whenever possible, with the result that the local exchequer has been almost exhausted, and the majority of civil servants throughout the vilayet have remained unpaid. In reply to a report submitted by the Defter-Dar upon the state of the finances of Maamuret-ul-Aziz, a telegram was received from the Sublime Porte stating that attempts had been made to negotiate a loan in Europe, but that the conditions proposed as a basis for such a loan were so heavy as to render it impracticable; and that the Imperial Government was consequently compelled to rely upon the intelligence and patriotism of the Vali and Defter-Dar to devise some method (such as the formation of special financial Commissions) of collecting from the various cazas constituting the vilayet the funds called for by the Central Government.

The sale of tithes this year has realized considerably less than that of 1896 owing to a fall of 25 per cent. in the market value of wheat. The drain upon the Provincial Budget has been, nevertheless, incessant, and the deficit therein, dating from the month of March last—*i.e.*, for seven months—has already reached the sum of £ T. 60,000, whereas the deficit for the whole financial year of 1896-97 did not exceed £ T. 90,000. Such officials as may have been paid nine months' salary last year cannot reasonably hope for more than six months' salary this year; and, should the present crisis continue, may very probably be reduced to three months' pay during the whole of 1898. Tax collectors are pressing for ten years' arrears of taxes in many of the neighbouring villages which were ruined during the troubles, and the real object of the Vali's tour to Malatia, Ageha, Tagh, and Adiaman (*vide* my telegram of the 5th ultimo) is simply, I am assured, to collect funds from every available source.

The Turkish functionary referred to concluded by remarking that the sums paid from the local Treasury to the various Imperial inspectors who have visited, remained in and burdened this vilayet for considerable periods without appreciable result, would have been far more wisely handled had they been reserved for the payment of the permanent local officials, who would not, in that case, have been so exposed to the temptation of supplementing their attenuated salary by unavowable and illegitimate means.

The Mixed Commission composed of six members (who will draw in all a monthly salary of 30,000 piastres from the several vilayets in which that Commission is to tour), expected here from Constantinople with a view to the reconstruction of Christian churches and schools destroyed during the disturbances, is calculated, therefore, to increase the penury both of plundered Armenians and unpaid Moslem officials, and to afford at the same time very slender hope of any material change being effected in the present aspect of the edifices in question.

I have, &c.
(Signed) RAPHAEL A. FONTANA.

No. 216.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received November 29.*)

(No. 772.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, November 25, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Kharput, reporting instances of turbulence among the Kurdish tribes in his district.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 216.

Vice-Consul Fontana to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 51.)

Kharpût, November 8, 1897.

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to report to your Excellency that a European, who has just returned from a visit to the Charsanjak viâ Palou, has furnished me with the following instances of the turbulence of certain Kurdish tribes inhabiting those districts.

Two Kurds were recently placed under arrest at Peri for wounding a Turk. A day or two later a number of Kurds belonging to the prisoners' tribe entered the town, broke into the prison, and carried away their fellow-tribesmen by force. No attempt has been made to chastise this overt act of defiance to the authorities, although Peri is the capital of the caza, and the seat of the Kaïmakam.

My informant being about to leave Peri for Kizil-Kilissé was warned that he would do well to alter his route, as fighting was going on between two tribes in the vicinity. As he was anxious, however, to lose no time, he obtained a strong escort of Kurds and pushed forward. After journeying some hours his party entered a deep gorge, which they found to be stained in places with freshly-shed blood. Shortly afterwards they were ordered by Kurdish pickets to turn back.

A powerful Aga of Palou named Said was murdered a few weeks ago in that town. The murderer, it appears, is well known as being a still more influential Kurd, as well as a member of the Idaré-Medjliss. The Kaïmakam shrinks, nevertheless, from taking action in the matter through fear of the tribe to which the criminal belongs.

I have, &c.

(Signed) RAPHAEL A. FONTANA.

No. 217.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received November* 29.)

(No. 773. Confidential.)

Constantinople, November 25, 1897.

My Lord,

WITH reference to my despatch No. 459 of the 9th July last, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul-General at Beyrout respecting the acquittal of Iskender Bey, Political Director in the Lebanon, of the charges brought against him.

I have, &c.

(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 217.

Consul-General Drummond Hay to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 67. Confidential.)

Beyrout, November 10, 1897.

Sir,

WITH reference to your Excellency's telegram of the 27th June last, relating to the reappointment of Naoum Pasha, and to subsequent correspondence regarding the charges against Iskender Bey Tueni, I have the honour to inclose a translation of a Mazbata of the Council of Administration of the Lebanon, who were directed by Naoum Pasha, as suggested by your Excellency, to hold a strict inquiry into the charges.

In their report the Council represent to the Governor-General the difficulties attending a strict investigation into charges derived from newspapers and other anonymous sources, but that they have nevertheless taken every means in their power to arrive at a just decision, and after submitting their opinion on each point, they exonerate Iskender Bey from blame, and testify to his upright character and long and faithful services to the Government.

I beg to mention that I had to use considerable persuasion with Naoum Pasha

before obtaining an inquiry by the Council of Administration, as his Excellency received contrary advice from other quarters.

Iskender Bey has now been authorized to resume his duties as Political Director in the Lebanon.

I have, &c.

(Signed) R. DRUMMOND HAY.

Inclosure 2 in No. 217.

Mazbata of the Administrative Council of the Lebanon regarding the accusations against Iskender Bey Tueni.

(Translation.)

WE have had the honour to receive your Excellency's order to examine very carefully the accusations brought against his Excellency Iskender Bey Tueni, Political Director, and to find out the truth, whether it be for his good or for his injury. We have also perused the petition presented to your Excellency by the said Bey on the 15th August, 1313, regarding the charges made against him, and begging for a strict official investigation.

In reply, we have to state as follows: Your Excellency knows well that an official inquiry necessitates some foundation. In the present case there is no ground which can be taken as a basis for an inquiry, no party having come forward either as informant or prosecutor, so as to enable this Council to proceed by way of interrogations and explanations on every charge as is prescribed by the law.

Since reading some articles in the Egyptian newspapers publishing accusations against Iskender Bey, we, as deputies of the Lebanon, never ceased to make officious inquiries, because they were directed against well-known persons, and cast reflections on all the Lebanese, and especially on the administrating body. We therefore considered it our duty, as good Lebanese, and as faithful servants to our Government, to follow up our investigations in that manner, but nothing transpired which gave any grounds for accusation. From what we have gathered the said Bey is accused of having taken bribes from the officials; of interfering in the Tribunals and other Departments; of smuggling arms; of making profits in buying the outfits of the gendarmerie, and also out of their pay.

Although we had in our officious capacity inquired into these matters, yet in accordance with your Excellency's orders, we renewed our investigation, seizing a favourable occasion when the said Bey was suspended from his duties, and was far away, and thinking that his absence would leave no excuse to the accusers from coming forward with their charges. Notwithstanding the long term that was given, no one came forward with any accusation, and no one gave us the slightest information.

With regard to the charges against Iskender Bey of accepting bribes in obtaining posts for officials, it is absurd to believe it, as it is a well-known fact that all the posts in the Administration are given by your Excellency, and no other person interferes in giving them.

We have, however, interrogated a great many of those whom those newspapers pointed out as having obtained their posts by bribery, but nothing appeared from their replies which would support the charges. The Presidents and members of the Tribunals, and the different Departments of the Administration, were also questioned regarding the alleged interference of Iskender Bey in their affairs; they all assured us that there is no truth whatever in those statements.

We further examined the books and accounts of the Military Department, and those of the Bureau de Comptabilité, and it was very clearly proved that there is no foundation, and no shadow of truth in the accusations, and besides, it must be mentioned that the clothes of the gendarmes are given to the lowest bidder, and notices are issued beforehand, and published in the newspapers in the different districts of the Lebanon. The same rule is adopted in the construction of bridges, roads, and the Kaïmakam's residences, and everything is done publicly, and through the Administrative Council, the order is eventually given to the lowest bidder, to whom the required sum is gradually paid in virtue of decisions given by this Council.

With regard to the alleged contraband in arms, the Council found after strict inquiry that it is a mere rumour without foundation.

The result of the investigation we have made proves that Iskender Bey is innocent of the charges brought against him. His straightforwardness and honest character, and his faithful and devoted services during thirty years to the Lebanon Government

have been witnessed, and are well known by several members of this Council, who have served with him in the past and present time, and they can testify that he has fulfilled faithfully the duties of his post in strict conformity with the good intentions of your Excellency, which represent those of His Imperial Majesty the Sultan, for whose glory and victory we always pray, and in consequence whereof this Mazbata was given by the Administrative Council of Mount Lebanon on the 10th Djemal-el-awal, 1315, and 4th October, 1313.

No. 218.

The Marquess of Salisbury to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 308.)
Sir, *Foreign Office, November* 30, 1897.

I HAVE received your Excellency's despatch No. 747 of the 11th instant, inclosing a Report by Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Bitlis on a journey which he recently made through the Caza of Khizan.

I request you to convey to Mr. Crow my thanks for his interesting Report.

I am, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 219.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received December 6.)

(No. 781.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, November* 27, 1897.

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Damascus, respecting recent events in the Jebel Druse.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 219.

Consul Richards to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 56.)
Sir, *Damascus, November* 15, 1897.

WITH reference to previous despatches on the same subject, I have the honour to report to your Excellency that from information received it would appear that the Government is demanding the payment of a third of the tithes from the Druses of the Jebel Druse, a demand with which the latter seem by no means ready or willing to comply.

In consequence of orders to that effect received from the central authorities of the vilayet, the Kaimakam of Sueda informed the Mudirs of Sukhad, Shahba, Mellah, and Aahreh that a third of the tithes would have to be paid. The inhabitants of these districts on hearing the news protested their inability to pay the tax, and, it was reported at the time, expelled the four Mudirs each from his own seat of Government. Whether force was actually employed against these officials appears now to be somewhat doubtful; but that the Mudirs have left their posts and are now at Sueda is, I believe, true. On the other hand the Vali informed me quite recently that although disquieting, not to say alarming, news had reached him a few days previously from the Jebel Druse district, yet, he said, he was glad to be able to assure me that matters had been grossly exaggerated, and he was convinced that there was no likelihood of any disturbance. That Nazim Pasha is doing everything that lies in his power to pacify the Druses there can be no doubt whatever, and certainly hitherto he has succeeded, thanks to a series of concessions which are largely due to his beneficent influence with the Porte. At the same time there are signs that the Druses are regaining confidence in themselves, and some of them would appear to be disposed to regard the concessions already made as evidence rather of weakness than of a sincere desire to show a just and lenient spirit towards them. However, I have every confidence in the Vali, and his ability to maintain order and tranquillity in the Hauran.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. S. RICHARDS.

No. 220.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received December 6.)

(No. 783. Confidential.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, November* 27, 1897.

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul-General at Beirout, inclosing a statement of the Budget of the Beirout Vilayet.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 220.

Consul-General Drummond Hay to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 70. Confidential.)
Sir, *Beirout, November* 17, 1897.

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Excellency herewith a Return of the Budget for the Vilayet of Beirout.

I am unable to vouch for the accuracy of the figures, as the local authorities, who are acquainted with the state of the finances, decline to furnish any statistics.

They could, however, be obtained from persons employed in the financial department of the administration, if your Excellency would authorize me to purchase the information for a small sum not exceeding 2*l*.

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. DRUMMOND HAY.

Inclosure 2 in No. 220.

Return of the Budget for the Vilayet of Beirout.

Revenus du Vilayet.	£ T.	Dépenses du Vilayet.	£ T.
Impôt Foncier (Verghu)	91,046	Magistrature (Chari Adlié)	44,785
Patente	8,060	Dépenses locales, traitements ..	28,508
Exonération militaire des Chrétiens ..	20,072	Payements hebdomadaires au Trésor Impérial	13,636
Moutons	25,074	Payements au Ministère (Dafter Hakani)	13,070
Dimes	126,328	Guerre	20,106
Mines et Bois	1,704	Gendarmerie, zaptiés, et falsildar ..	32,721
Taxes et transferts	13,507	Police	2,834
Revenus des propriétés de l'État ..	1,250	Service Sanitaire	455
Revenus des Tribunaux	4,218	Havalés	81,017
Divers	23,046	Personnel (to needy people) ..	9,451
		Divers	1,085
Total	314,750	Total	288,060

Intérêts et Liste Civile, nil.

No. 221.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received December 6.)

(No. 784.)
Constantinople, November 27, 1897.

My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul-General at Beirout, respecting the action of Naoum Pasha with regard to the election of a new Greek Catholic Patriarch for Syria.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 221.

Consul-General Drummond Hay to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 71.)
Beirout, November 17, 1897.

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to inform your Excellency that the Greek Catholic Bishops in Syria, numbering thirteen, and now assembled at Beirout for the election of new a Patriarch, decided on holding their convocation at Sarba, a village near Djouny in the Lebanon, under the Presidency of Mgr. Duval, the Papal Delegate, but it appears that their arrangements were checked by Naoum Pasha, who informed them that any meeting held under the Presidency of, or in conjunction with, a foreign Prelate would be denounced as illegal by the Ottoman Government.

This notification was communicated by the Papal Delegate to the French Consul-General, who I understand has reported on the incident to his Government.

It is stated that Naoum Pasha acted under instructions from Constantinople.

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. DRUMMOND HAY.

No. 222.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received December 6.)

(No. 785.)
Constantinople, November 27, 1897.

My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul-General at Beirout, respecting the removal from Beirout to the mountain of the winter residence of the Governor-General of the Lebanon.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 222.

Consul-General Drummond Hay to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 72.)
Beirout, November 18, 1897.

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to report to your Excellency that the Administrative Body of Mount Lebanon removed on the 15th instant, after a short vacation, to their winter quarters at Baabda.

Naoum Pasha entered yesterday into residence at Hadeth, which is situated at a short distance from the Serai, and about three-quarters of an hour by carriage road from Beirout.

The selection by his Excellency of a winter residence in his own district, in

preference to Beirout, has afforded universal satisfaction in the mountain, and will probably be followed in due course of time by the construction of a permanent dwelling-house for the Governor-General in that neighbourhood.

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. DRUMMOND HAY.

No. 223.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received December 6.)

(No. 788.)
Constantinople, November 28, 1897.

My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Trebizond, respecting the departure for Samsoun of Shakir Pasha's mission.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 223.

Consul Longworth to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 33.)
Trebizond, November 18, 1897.

Sir,

WITH reference to my despatch of the 4th ultimo, I have the honour to report that the Commission headed by Shakir Pasha left yesterday for Samsoun. His Excellency hopes to obtain the authorization of the Government to spend the winter there instead of at Tokat or Amassia.

The Commission occupied itself at Trebizond in investigating closely the judicial and administrative procedures of the authorities, with the result that the inspection discovered no abuse of power and few irregularities, though the officials were personally found to be less capable than those in the interior, which is explained by the latter having obtained their almost undesirable appointments through their own merits rather than through protection.

The members of the Commission have left behind, on the whole, a rather favourable impression, especially among the Christians. They were in frequent and friendly intercourse with my colleagues and myself, and among Europeans in general, their individual qualities being more appreciated than the utility of their work

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. Z. LONGWORTH.

No. 224.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received December 6.)

(No. 789.)
Constantinople, November 29, 1897.

My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch, which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul-General at Bagdad, respecting the condition of the Christian population of the Tiyarieh mountains.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 224.

Consul-General Loch to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 106.)
Bagdad, November 3, 1897.

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to very respectfully submit, for your Excellency's information, copy (in translation) of a letter, No. 45, dated the 5th ultimo, from the British Consular-Agent at Mosul, reporting on the condition of the Christians of the Tiyarieh mountains,

and of the offers made by the Russian Government to the Nestorian Patriarch, Mar Shemoon, of protection and assistance, should he and his followers embrace the tenets of the Greek Orthodox Church.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. LOCH, *Lieutenant-Colonel.*

Inclosure 2 in No. 224.

Mr. Rassam to Consul-General Loch.

(No. 45.)
(Translation.) *Mosul, October 5, 1897.*

I HAVE had the honour of receiving your letter dated the 24th ultimo calling for a report on the condition of the Christians of the Tiyarieh mountains. In reply, I have to state that as my visit to that country was for a change of air, and not for inquiry into the state of those people, I took no steps to make the necessary inquiries, especially as the greater part of those mountains are amenable to the authorities of Van, and there is a British Consul there, I found it unnecessary to take such steps, but in the mean time I can give you certain information and say that the Christians of the Tiyarieh located on the mountains distant from the two vilayets of Van and Mosul are living in ease and repose, being free from the oppressions of the Kurds and the injustice of the Government officers, who find it impossible to go there; but, on the other hand, they suffer some difficulty from being debarred from going to Van and Mosul for purposes of trade, fearing the oppressions of the Kurds and plunders committed by them in both those vilayets. This restriction upon their movements has reduced their means and rendered them poor, for the limited state of their cultivation do not supply their needs.

As to the Nestorians of the districts in the vicinity of Van, such as Kawir, Albak, Liwan, Shamzdin, &c., they are tormented by the oppressions of the Kurds living near them, to whom they always serve as objects for plunder and murder, who are incited for by the authorities. Owing to this many villages in that country have been reduced to ruin and the inhabitants dispersed, so much so that Mar Yeshooyab, the Bishop of Shamzdin, was compelled to flee from his diocese for fear of the son of Sheikh Obeidallah (who had killed Mar Kuriel, the Bishop of Urmia and Kasha-wuha, and ten persons of the notable Nestorians of Urmiah), and who through the assistance of Her Majesty's Consul at Van was enabled to leave for Persia after sending his things there previously.

After my arrival at the village Ashitha, I heard that two persons from that village who were carrying wool to Mosul laden on their beasts were murdered on their way by certain Kurdish ruffians and their mules plundered, and after some time I was informed that a party of Kurds had fallen upon the pasture ground of that village and plundered 10,000 sheep belonging to the inhabitants of that and other Christian villages. This is the life the Nestorians of the district of Amadieh down to the River Zab are leading, a life of indignity and misery being always subject to attacks by the Kurds and their Aghas, without security of life and property. One of these oppressors was Reshid Beg, who during his term of office as Mudir of Barwarah (who sometimes himself personally, and at other times through his men and followers) left no act of oppression unexercised upon the poor people. This I proved to be a fact by inquiry from the people of the villages I happened to pass on my way. The various oppressions are difficult to describe without going personally through those villages and making inquiries from trustworthy persons of their inhabitants.

During my stay at the village of Cochanis, the residence of Mar Shemoon, it was fully proved to me that the Russian Government is inclined to draw Mar Shemoon and the Nestorians under him to her side, so much so that the Russian Consul at Van, when he visited His Beatitude, pressed upon him to accept it, promising that the necessary protection and assistance both with respect to property and toleration should they but follow the tenets of the Greek Orthodox Church and drive away the missionaries of the Archbishop of Canterbury from among his community, and when he found His Beatitude disinclined to agree to his proposal, left him as if he were annoyed and gave it to be understood that he would be an opposer in his affairs with the Government concerning his community if he would not alter his ideas. Some months ago, I am told, certain Russian missionaries went to Urmia and persuaded the Nestorians in Persia to accept their tenets and promised them protection, and when these Nestorians wished to enter among the Nestorians in Turkey and go to Mar Shemoon, His Beatitude refused them permission and warned the community to avoid them. I myself, as far as I was able, advised Mar Shemoon to refuse acceptance, describing to him the grievous consequences which would follow to the ruin of his country, and he accepted my advice; but if the present state of affairs be allowed to continue without remedy and assistance in the removal of the oppression of the Kurds and their cruelties they will, against their will, adopt any means by which they can relieve themselves from the hands of those tyrants and find repose.

(Signed) NIMROD RASSAM.

No. 225.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received December 6.)

(No. 790.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, November 29, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul-General at Bagdad, containing Mosul news.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 225.

Consul-General Loch to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 107.)
Sir, *Bagdad, November 4, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to very respectfully submit, for your Excellency's information, copy (in translation) of a letter, No. 44, dated the 5th ultimo, from Mr. Nimrud Rassam, British Consular Agent at Mosul, containing items of local news, which may perhaps prove of interest to your Excellency.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. LOCH, *Lieutenant-Colonel.*

Inclosure 2 in No. 225.

Mr. Rassam to Consul-General Loch.

(No. 44.)
(Translation.) *Mosul, October 5, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to inform you that Behram Pasha, the Mutessarif of Sa'art, arrived here on Wednesday last, and was appointed Mutessarif for Kerkook vice Ismail Beg, dismissed. There also arrived one Rumiz Effendi, Maktubchi at Diarbekir, who exchanged posts with Ra'fat Beg the late Maktubchi of Mosul; the latter left for Diarbekir some days ago.

No order having as yet been restored in this province, pillages and murders often occur in the country, and consequently the roads continue unsafe. Within this town two Mahommedans were murdered yesterday and the day before.

His Excellency the Wali having heard that a good and valuable mare is in the possession of Mirza Pasha, the Amir of the Yezidis, asked to be allowed to have her. The Amir refused to send her. His Excellency thereupon stopped payment of the monthly allowance of 20 liras assigned to him and to his three sisters since the time of Omar Pasha, when they were forced to embrace Mahommedanism, and now the Wali, on the pretext of their return to their former religion, intends, by threats of forfeiture of their pays, to compel Mirza Pasha to send him the mare as a present. His Excellency will doubtless attain his object when the Amir finds him persistent in his threats.

Most of the villages under Mosul, numbering perhaps 250, having remained unfirmed owing to non-payment of last year's dues, the Administrative Council appointed a number of officers for their administration, but none of these officers were confirmed in their appointments until they offered bribes to the Wali, the Cadhi, and the Daftardar at the rate of, as I am informed, from 10 to 20 liras, and those whose pays stood in arrears during the whole time of their service, at the rate of 5 liras. When these officers arrived at the villages they entered into an agreement with the inhabitants and sold them three-fourths of the tithe, and showed only one-fourth in the accounts

they submitted to Government. Thus a very considerable loss has been caused to the Treasury, for after the manner these officers have been treated, should offers be at any time made for those villages by farmers, not one-fourth of the amount offered will be realized.

(Signed) NIMROD RASSAM.

No. 226.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received December 6.)

(No. 792.)

My Lord, *Constantinople, December 2, 1897.*

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Jerusalem, reporting the dismissal of the Mutessarif of Jerusalem, with remarks on his antecedents.

I have, &c.

(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 226.

Consul Dickson to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 55.)

Sir, *Jerusalem, November 8, 1897.*

WITH reference to my telegram of the 1st instant, I have the honour to report to your Excellency that on the 31st ultimo, his Excellency, Ibrahim Pasha, the Mutessarif of Jerusalem, received a telegram from the Ministry of the Interior informing him that he was dismissed from his post, and ordering him to leave Jerusalem. At the same time he was directed to hand over the administration of the province to the Cadi, who also received a telegram authorizing him to act as Mutessarif until the arrival of Ibrahim Pasha's successor, Tewfik Bey, one of the Sultan's secretaries. Ibrahim Pasha left Jerusalem on the 3rd instant, with the intention of proceeding to Damascus, where he proposes to reside for the present.

This somewhat summary dismissal of his Excellency has caused various rumours to be spread as to the reason of it, for it is pretty well known that his Excellency has enemies at the capital who for some time past have been endeavouring to bring about his fall. The report, however, more generally believed is that his dismissal is due to a complaint made against him by the Russian Embassy and the Greek Patriarchate in this city, because his Excellency permitted a mosque to be built contiguous to the ruins of a church of the Empress Eudoxia, which had been uncovered last Spring by the members of the Palestine Exploration Fund, near the Pool of Siloam, during their excavations, and which had been purchased by the Greek Convent with the object of its restoration. This church was considered a very important discovery by the Greeks, but some of the leading Mussulmans of Jerusalem, actuated by a spirit of fanaticism, and encouraged by the Cadi, declared that a mosque had existed in the vicinity of the church, and in order to prevent the Greeks from procuring a Firman for its restoration, at once built a mosque near the spot. Protests were entered by the Greek Patriarchate against such action, but no heed was given by the Mutessarif, and finally a complaint was lodged against him at Constantinople by the Greek Patriarch which, it is said, was strongly supported by the Russian Consulate-General here. As, however, M. de Nelidow, the Russian Ambassador, was instrumental last year in procuring Ibrahim Pasha's reinstatement in his post when an attempt was made to remove him, as was reported in my despatch No. 42 of the 25th November, 1896, no steps appear to have been taken by the Russian Embassy until after the departure from Constantinople of M. de Nelidow. It is said that it is these representations which have caused Ibrahim Pasha's dismissal.

The departure of his Excellency from Jerusalem is generally regretted. It is just seven years since he was appointed Governor of Palestine, and during that period he has endeavoured to discharge his duties faithfully and impartially, and has done all that was possible to ameliorate the condition of this province. His character is unimpeachable, for in no instance am I aware of a charge of bribery or corruption having been proved against him, and his private life was simple and unostentatious. Want of support, however, at Constantinople caused him occasionally to exhibit a lack of firmness and energy in trying circumstances which were attributed to weakness of character, but had

No. 227*.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received December* 13.)

(No. 794.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, December* 2, 1897.

WITH reference to my telegram No. 647 of the 20th ultimo, I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum respecting the increase of the garrison at that place, and the reported intention of the authorities to concentrate troops at Mush.

I have also the honour to report that I have this morning received a further telegram from Mr. Graves, in which he states that telegraphic orders have arrived from Constantinople to stop the work of transporting military stores, &c., from Erzeroum to Mush. Five hundred bullock-carts had already been requisitioned at the former place for the purpose of effecting this transport.

Mr. Graves adds that four infantry battalions from Van have reached Erzeroum.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 227*.

Consul Graves to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 42.)
Sir, *Erzeroum, November* 16, 1897.

I HAVE the honour to report that considerable activity is now noticeable in military circles here. Of the force hitherto concentrated in the Van district, at least six battalions are expected at Erzeroum, as well as an infantry regiment from Sivas. Greater care is being shown in the revision of the lists of reserves than has ever been known. On the Trebizond-Erzeroum and Erzingian-Erzeroum roads all transport has been taken up for military stores, clothing, &c., a very large quantity of which has been landed at Trebizond, and, as far as my information goes, the steps being taken point to the intention to concentrate a force of 20,000 men in or near Mush. I believe the strictest orders have been given that the necessary stores should be pushed through to Mush without any loss of time.

The common belief here is that these preparations are being made in view of a Russian invasion in the spring.

Captain F. Maunsell, R.A., Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Sivas, who is now here, and is engaged in following every move of these military preparations with attention, had proposed to start to-morrow, the 17th instant, for Sivas viâ Erzingian; but under the circumstances of the case, I venture to suggest that he should remain at Erzeroum at least long enough to obtain fuller confirmation of the above intelligence.

I had the honour to report the substance of the above to your Excellency by telegraph to-day.

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. W. GRAVES.

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he been upheld by influential friends at the capital, he would probably have shown more decision and determination than he has been given credit for. In any case his aim seems to have been to govern his province peacefully and honestly, and it is doubtful, taking this object in view, whether a better man will be found to replace him.

I have, &c.
(Signed) JOHN DICKSON.

No. 227.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received December* 6.)

(No. 793.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, December* 2, 1897.

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Kharput, respecting the recent murder by a Moslem comrade of an Armenian zaptieh at Argha.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 227.

Vice-Consul Fontana to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 52.)
Sir, *Kharput, November* 9, 1897.

I HAVE the honour to report to your Excellency, with regret, that another Armenian zaptieh has lately been murdered by one of his Moslem comrades at Argha.

The circumstances preceding and attending the crime were, so far as I can learn, as follows:—

The wife a Turkish zaptieh and Onbashi, named Muktad, of Malatia, was some time ago condemned to three years' imprisonment for wilfully causing the death of her newly-born child. The husband was deeply depressed in consequence, and the trouble seemed to have affected his mind. The authorities, therefore, thinking that a change of scene might benefit the man, attached him, together with the Armenian zaptieh Mihran, to the Vali's suite to serve as tax-collectors in the Argha district, whither Raouf Bey was then about to proceed from Malatia.

Whilst collecting taxes, subsequently, in one of the Argha villages, Mihran, it appears, asked Muktad some question regarding his wife's imprisonment, whereupon the Moslem raised his rifle and fired at Mihran, inflicting a mortal wound; then, either through remorse, despair, or fear of imprisonment, reloaded his rifle and shot himself dead.

The following particulars have reached me concerning the assassination of Varhan (reported in my telegram of the 17th May last), Armenian Commissary of Police, by a Turkish soldier at Malatia:

Varhan, who appears to have been very efficient and zealous in his duty, happened to reprove one of the soldiers attached to his patrol for selling contraband tobacco. The man replied with foul language, and, upon Varhan reporting him, was placed under arrest. As soon as he was released, however, he lay in wait for the Armenian, and springing upon him as he passed, threw him down in the mud of the street. Varhan immediately complained to the Mutessarif, with whom he was on excellent terms, but the latter being unwilling to vex the Commandant by a formal charge against one of his troops, confined himself to sending for the culprit and reproving him severely.

A few evenings later the man availed himself of the opportunity, whilst on patrol, of taking summary vengeance upon Varhan by shooting him through the back with his Martini.

The murderer was sentenced to fifteen years' imprisonment.

I have, &c.
(Signed) RAPHAEL A. FONTANA.

No. 228.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received December* 13.)

(No. 234.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, December* 6, 1897.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 758 of the 18th instant, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Acting Vice-Consul at Mersina, respecting the recent dismissal of the Vali, and Mutessarif on the demand of the Austrian Government, in consequence of the incident in connection with M. Brazzafolli.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 228.

Acting Vice-Consul Christmann to Sir P. Currie.

Mersina, November 24, 1897.

Excellency,

MAJOR MASSY, in leaving me in charge of this Vice-Consulate, assured me that he had already informed your Excellency respecting the Brazzafolli case; my duty, therefore, is to report only what has occurred since.

On the 7th of the present month arrived here from Suda Bay the Austrian cruiser "Leopard," sent for the protection of the Austro-Hungarian subjects. The Commander of the ship paid first the usual courteous visit to the Mutessarif, who returned it at once. During these visits not a word was said about the Brazzafolli case, it having to be dealt with by the expected special Delegate of the Constantinople Embassy.

The telegraphic services between the capital and here being interrupted in consequence of storms, which destroyed partly the wire, there was no news for over ten days. The Austrian Admiral sent a torpedo-boat, the "Satellit," to look after the "Leopard."

On the 19th instant both the Vali of Adana and the Mutessarif of Mersina have been dismissed, and ordered to leave with no delay. The interim of the vilayet has been given to Ferik Chakir Pasha, and that of Mersina to Rashid Pasha, Muvin of the Vali.

Both the dismissed functionaries have left Mersina Sunday last, the 21st instant, by the Russian steamer "Rostoff," and their departure was effected with a kind of demonstration, from the Turks, evidently considering the parting functionaries as victims of European interference. The truth is that not only the Vali, his Excellency Hussein Hilmi Bey, but also the Mutessarif of Mersina, his Excellency Mehmed Nazim Pasha, were both much liked and estimated, and it is to some extent excusable that the natives found them to be much better than those formerly known.

The Austrian Embassy in addition to the dismission of the Vali and Mutessarif, demanded the salutation of the national flag. The particulars of this ceremony having been agreed between the local authorities and the Commander of the "Leopard," the salutation of the flag took place to-day at half-past 11 A.M.

One company of infantry took position in front of the Austro-Hungarian Vice-Consulate. There were the Commanders of the two Austrian men-of-war, "Leopard" and "Satellit" with their staffs. The Mutessarif *ad interim*, Rashid Pasha, with his Secretary, the Military Commander of Mersina, the Captain of the Port, arrived all in full dress. A supplementary flag-staff had been placed on the balcony of the Vice-Consulate, and at a signal given by the Captain of the "Leopard" the Austro-Hungarian was slowly hoisted, the soldiers presenting arms until the flag reached the top. Hands were shaken between the authorities present, and then each party went its way.

Nobody of the Consular authorities had been invited to assist.

I have, &c.
(Signed) M. F. CHRISTMANN.

No. 229.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received December* 20.)

(No. 816.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, December* 12, 1897.

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Bitlis, describing an act of brigandage which he witnessed in the Bitlis road, and reporting the action he took in the matter.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure 1 in No. 229.

Vice-Consul Crow to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 32.)
Sir, *Bitlis, November* 23, 1897.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith inclosed to your Excellency copy of a letter which I have addressed to the Vali of this vilayet on the subject of an attack by Kurdish brigands on a caravan near Bitlis on the 20th instant, of which I was an eye-witness.

The Caza of Modeki is at present without a Governor, the Kaimakam, who was recently appointed, having resigned and returned to Bitlis. The acts of brigandage committed in the immediate neighbourhood of the town are ascribed to the inhabitants of that district.

The murders reported in my despatch No. 14 of the 25th May last still remain unpunished, and the Kilimen, encouraged by the inability of the authorities to quell such disorders or their indifference in the matter, commit whatever excesses they choose, and render caravan and passenger traffic by the southern route precarious and difficult.

It is to be hoped that the snow which is now falling heavily will put a stop to further disorders.

I have, &c.
(Signed) FRANCIS EDWARD CROW.

Inclosure 2 in No. 229.

Vice-Consul Crow to the Vali of Bitlis.

Excellence, *Bitlis, le 22 Novembre*, 1897.

JE suis rentré à Bitlis hier et j'aurai l'honneur de venir vous présenter mes respects dans quelques jours. Voulez-vous en attendant me permettre de vous signaler officieusement un petit incident qui s'est passé avant-hier sous mes propres yeux et à six heures de distance de la ville même.

Une caravane de Kurdes a été dévalisée sur la route de Sairt près de Do Khan, et les brigands, dix ou quinze individus, qui sont censés être de Modeki, n'ont pris la fuite qu'au moment de notre arrivée, ayant enlevé trois charges. Nous tombons au beau milieu de la bagarre; des cris et des coups de fusil de part et d'autre. On voyait les voleurs sur le pont au fond du ravin qui emportaient le butin, pendant que leurs camarades échangeaient des coups de fusil avec les muletiers qui descendaient la pente de la montagne de notre côté. Le gendarme Abdullah Chaoush, qui m'escortait, a même pris part à l'affaire, et a aidé à forcer les brigands à se retirer, en leur tirant plusieurs coups. Mon Dragoman qui, avec moi, assistait au fait, vous en fournira des détails plus précis.

Je ne relève cette affaire, dont j'ai été le spectateur involontaire et qui, quoique grave, n'a rien d'anormal dans les conditions actuelles, que pour attirer l'attention de votre Excellence à l'absence complète de sécurité même sur les grands chemins dans le vilayet, où les voyageurs et les passants sont exposés à recevoir de la part de ces chevaliers d'industrie des balles qui ne leur sont aucunement destinées.

Du reste, votre Excellence sait mieux que personne les mesures nécessaires à prendre pour mettre fin à ces désordres.

Veuillez, &c.
(Signé) FRANCIS EDWARD CROW.

No. 230.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received December 20.*)

(No. 817.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, December 14, 1897.*

WITH reference to my despatch No. 722 of the 26th October, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Diarbekir respecting the lawlessness of the Hamidieh Kurds in the Sandjak of Mardin.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 230.

Vice-Consul Waugh to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 15.)
Sir, *Diarbekir, November 30, 1897.*

IN confirmation of my telegram of the 24th instant, I have the honour to report that there has been no serious bloodshed in the district of Mardin since the month of August. In that month there were some thirty or forty cases of murder; but the victims were not Armenians, of whom there are very few in that district. Some were Syrians; but the casualties were due chiefly to local tribal feuds, in which religious differences play no part.

As regards, however, the insecurity on the plain, which forms the wealthiest portion of the Sandjak of Mardin, it still continues as reported in my preceding despatch of the 10th October.

It is urgent that some effective jurisdiction, civil or military, should be established over the Hamidiehs.

The civil authorities, from Mudir up to Vali, complain of their powerlessness to deal with them under existing conditions. The military authorities are represented by two cavalry Lieutenant-Colonels, resident at Mardin and Jezireh, who have no control, and have not yet begun to drill the nomads they are supposed to command; and the villagers on the plain, Moslem no whit less than Christian, complain bitterly of the unrestricted pillaging of some of the Hamidieh Chiefs.

Article 28 of the Reform Scheme is a dead letter in this vilayet.

The Hamidiehs have not been supplied with arms by the Government; but they, in common with every one else, possess arms, and, of course, they carry them. All the distinctive uniform they have is a metal badge in their head-dress, and that they always wear.

The privates and non-commissioned officers are nominally subject to the ordinary Courts; but these are quite powerless to arrest them; no one dares to give evidence against them, and, as a matter of fact, they are never punished.

The officers cannot be prosecuted without permission from Constantinople. The Vali himself has repeatedly applied for this permission in the case of Mustapha Pasha of Jezireh, a notorious Chief, but without success.

The Military Regulations promised are not yet published, so far as I know, and, in any case, do not affect the situation at present.

These tribal Chiefs, who were always delicate to handle, have now been taught to consider themselves independent of the Vali, who is refused authority to deal energetically with them, and is instructed to use conciliatory methods.

Consequently, the sheep and camels, whose robbery from under the walls of Diarbekir I repeated in my preceding despatch, have not yet been recovered.

If the Hamidiehs are to remain withdrawn from such control as the civil authorities formerly exercised over these nomad tribes, some effective military control should be substituted.

The most notorious offender is Mustapha Pasha, of Jezireh. His removal and exile is, I believe, desired by the Vali himself.

Apart from this question, I saw nothing very bad in the state of the Mardin Sandjak.

The new Mutessarif (Raif Effendi) seems to be doing his best, and during my stay there he satisfactorily settled the question of the forced appropriation by Kurds of the lands of the Armenian Catholic village of Tell Ermen, which the Patriarch Azarian had been pressing for some time.

I have, &c.
(Signed) A. T. WAUGH.

No. 231.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received December 20.*)

(No. 818.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, December 14, 1897.*

WITH reference to my telegram No. 649 of the 20th November, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Bitlis, reporting on the proceedings in the trial of the murderers of Yusuf Yunan at Sairt. I propose, before taking any further action, to await the revision of the Judgment, and, meanwhile, have instructed the Legal Adviser of this Embassy to continue to watch the case.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 231.

Vice-Consul Crow to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 33.)
Sir, *Bitlis, November 25, 1897.*

MY despatch No. 31 and my telegrams Nos. 71, 72, and 73 will have conveyed to your Excellency the substance of the information obtained during my recent visit to Sairt in connection with the murder of Yusuf Yunan, the Armenian Relief Agent, in March last, and the trial of his murderers.

I remained in Sairt and the neighbourhood more than a month, and returned on the 21st instant to Bitlis. I have nothing of importance to add to what is contained in the papers mentioned above, and will merely supplement the details already given with the conclusions which I formed from the general inquiry.

With regard to the occurrence itself and the behaviour of the local officials, I do not think any negligence can be justly imputed either to the police or the judicial authorities. On the contrary, they were prompt in arresting the murderers, and seem to have been over zealous in their endeavours to force them to admit their guilt. Torture was employed; the men were beaten and suspended by their necks, and finally confessed to the crime, relating all the circumstances under which it was committed, and, on the information thus obtained, the weapons stolen from Yusuf Yunan were discovered in the hiding-place where they had been secreted by his murderers.

The authorities complain that Yusuf Yunan did not apply to them for proper protection, and say that the deceased neglected to take suitable precautions for the safety of the money. This may be the case. He slept alone, and his house was unprotected, though he carried arms.

The accused deny the existence of money, though it is clearly proved that shortly before his death the deceased received the sum of £T. 200 through the post, and it is difficult to conjecture what could have been the object of the crime if it was not the acquisition of this sum.

It is possible, and not improbable, that the ex-Mutessarif, Bahrain Pasha, connived at the murder, though there is no direct evidence to support this theory; and, without some tangible proof, it would be useless to raise the question. The ex-Mutessarif was admittedly corrupt and unscrupulous. He was deeply in debt, and at the time of the murder was under orders from the Central Government to forward a considerable sum to Bitlis. He even tried to borrow £T. 200 from Yusuf Yunan, through the medium of the Public Prosecutor, and the refusal of the Agent to comply with this request led to a quarrel between them. Shortly after Yusuf Yunan was murdered, and the money disappeared.

On the other hand, the relatives of the condemned men proceeded to Constantinople shortly after the sentence to obtain the intercession of the Valide-i-Sultan on their behalf. This proceeding must have necessitated a considerable outlay, and, after orders

had been issued by the Court of Cassation for a revision of the case, the brother of one of the condemned men purchased a large quantity of goods in Constantinople, returned to Sairt, and opened a shop. Collusion between members of one family is not unlikely, but the Court do not seem to regard this fact as significant, and state that the two brothers were independent of one another, and that the property of one cannot be applied to satisfy the debts of the other.

The points on which the case has been returned for revision are, as reported, unimportant.

At the original hearing the accused claimed to be represented by their own counsel, which was disallowed. This decision has been overruled.

In the Judgment all the parties are described as principals. This is not in accordance with the evidence, which shows that some held the door while others inflicted the blows, and the designations are to be corrected accordingly.

The prisoners confessed the murder before the Mustantik, but, when brought into Court, retracted this statement, which, they said, had been obtained from them by torture. The President of the Court refused to admit this plea, and ruled that their original statements were binding. The protest was, however, noted in the evidence, and exception was taken to the matter by the Court of Cassation. I do not think this will materially affect the case, as the men were not condemned on their confession alone, and other more important evidence, such as the discovery of the murdered man's property in their possession, led to their conviction.

The Acting Mutessarif, Nari Bey, who comes from Narzan, knew little about the case. He, however, made a careful inquiry into it at my request, and I begged him to use his influence with the President of the Court and the Public Prosecutor, of whom the former is well disposed, in case they should allow themselves to be worked upon by public opinion in Sairt, which evinces strong sympathy with the murderers, and may bring pressure to bear to defeat the ends of justice.

I instanced the analogous case of an Armenian priest, who was murdered in the town on the same day as Yusuf Yuzan, and in broad daylight. The murderers seem to have been caught almost red-handed, and were condemned to fifteen years' imprisonment. They, however, protested their innocence, and the sentence was quashed by the Court of Cassation for want of evidence, and the men released a month ago.

Nuri Bey assured me that a similar result would in no case attend the present proceedings. The men, he said, were doomed. He reiterated this statement on several occasions, and gave me the most positive assurances, in the presence of the Tabour Agassi and the Chief Commissaire of Police, that the original sentence would be upheld.

The trial is still proceeding, and the Relief Agent, Yusuf Caracalla, is watching the case on behalf of M. Andons and the widow, and will report to me any further progress. When I left the Court were awaiting the deposition of a soldier in Hazon, who was present at the discovery of the deceased's property in the possession of the murderers, and whose evidence against them is important. I understand that the testimony of this witness will terminate the proceedings, which are otherwise complete.

As regards the property of the murderers and the orders issued by the Porte for the sale of it, these orders are only executory after the delivery of the sentence and its definite confirmation by the Court of Cassation. One of the accused has a share in a house and garden value 10 liras; the rest have nothing. I understand from the agent who is watching the case on behalf of M. Andons that the Relief Committee are unwilling to press for execution for this sum only, and contemplate action at Constantinople for the recovery of the total amount lost from the Turkish Government.

I have, &c.
(Signed) FRANCIS EDWARD CROW.

No. 232.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received December* 20.)

(No. 819.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, December* 15, 1897.

IN my despatch No. 591 of the 2nd September, I had the honour to report to your Lordship the circumstances attending the arrest of an Armenian girl named Annek Kechmechian, when engaged in distributing letters addressed by the Hintchagist Committee of Constantinople to the Ambassadors. Since that date the Dragomans of some of the

Embassies have made repeated representations at the Porte with a view to securing the girl's release, and the Grand Vizier promised that when the inquiry was finished she should be aowlled to go free.

When the case came on for trial, I instructed Mr. Fitzmaurice to attend the Court, and I regret to state that, in spite of the promises made by the Grand Vizier, she was convicted of connection with the revolutionary party, and condemned to internment for life in a fortress.

It appears that though there was no absolute proof of her guilt, the conviction in accordance with Article 58 of the Penal Code was based on the presumption that as she was found in the act of distributing seditious documents, and her evidence was contradictory and conflicting, she was acting as the agent of a revolutionary Society.

I propose, in conjunction with the Italian and French Embassies, to endeavour to obtain the Sultan's pardon for the girl.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

No. 233.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received December* 20.)

(No. 820. Confidential.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, December* 15, 1897.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 690 of the 11th October, respecting the negotiations carried on between the Sultan and the Armenian Patriarchate, I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship the translation of a threatening letter recently addressed to Artin Pasha by the Constantinople branch of the Hintchagist Society, on account of the share taken by him in those negotiations.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 233.

Letter addressed to Artin Pasha Dadian.

(Traduction.)

MALGRÉ les quelques avertissements que le Comité Hintchagiste de Constantinople vous a adressé à diverses reprises dans le but de vous écarter de la voie anti-nationale que vous suivez, il constate aujourd'hui avec le plus profond ressentiment que non seulement vous ne vous êtes pas inspiré de la gravité de la situation, mais que, en montrant plus de zèle et la main dans la main d'un lâche Patriarche, vous dressez des rapports obscures dont vous espérez le succès afin de préjudicier le corps révolutionnaire et démolir ainsi la cause nationale.

Avec un égoïsme détestable, vous ne craignez pas de faire des intérêts sacrés de la nation un instrument de vos calculs odieux et vous avez l'audace incompréhensible de jeter publiquement en avant des membres de votre sinistre dynastie pour tendre un piège de machinations perfides aux Comités révolutionnaires.

Considérant dès lors que les avertissements pacifiques ne réussissent pas à vous rappeler à l'ordre notre Comité se trouve obligé de se servir à votre égard de mesures telles qu'elle puissent inévitablement sauver la nation d'un Arménien destructeur comme vous.

Si vous et vos misérables complices formez même une armée, vous serez encore incapable d'étouffer les cris de protestations Arméniennes, et le corps révolutionnaire, interprète fidèle des véritables sentiments du peuple Arménien, n'abandonnera point les armes jusqu'à ce qu'il parvienne à son noble but.

Au nom de la branche Hintchagiste au Comité de Constantinople et avec le consentement de son Comité Exécutif.

(L. C. à l'Ancre Rouge.)

Constantinople, le 18 (30) *Novembre*, 1897.

No. 234.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received December* 20.)

(No. 821.)
Constantinople, December 15, 1897.

My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Kharput, respecting the movements of Kaïmakams in that vilayet, and the peculations committed by Refik Effendi, Kaïmakam of Piturgué.

I have &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 234.

Vice-Consul Fontana to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 53.)
Kharput, November 30, 1897.

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to report to your Excellency that Aatif Effendi, Kaïmakam of Husni Mansour, and Dervish Effendi, Kaïmakam of Kiahta, have exchanged office. Refik Effendi, the Kaïmakam recently transferred from Kizil-Kilissé to Piturgué, and alluded to in my despatch No. 38 of the 18th August last, has been involved in extensive peculation, it seems, since taking over the administration of the latter caza.

In consequence of the discovery of certain irregularities in the financial Returns forwarded by Refik Effendi to the Vali, the Colonel of Gendarmerie at Kharput was dispatched to Piturgué some weeks ago to make inquiry, and, if possible, elucidate matters. According to a Report since submitted by the Colonel to the Vali, the Kaïmakam in question would appear to have appropriated 20,000 piastres from the 40,000 piastres representing the total of taxes collected locally during a certain period. When reprimanded for the theft, Refik Effendi is said to have replied that he had many debts, and that he felt it a matter of conscience to pay his creditors; and no punishment has been inflicted upon him, as far as I am aware, up to the present moment.

I have, &c.
(Signed) RAPHAEL A. FONTANA.

No. 235.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received December* 20.)

(No. 822.)
Constantinople, December 15, 1897.

My Lord,

WITH reference to my despatch No. 794 of the 2nd instant, I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum respecting military movements at Erzeroum and Mush.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 235.

Consul Graves to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 45.)
Erzeroum, December 1, 1897.

Sir,

WITH reference to my despatch No. 42 of the 16th ultimo, I have the honour to report that telegraphic orders were received here three or four days ago to stop the transport of war material to Mush, to carry which 500 bullock carts had been requisitioned in the villages round Erzeroum.

The 4th battalion of the 27th Infantry Regiment arrived at Erzeroum from Van on the 26th ultimo, and on the 28th ultimo the 1st and 2nd battalions of the 25th, and the 4th battalion of the 26th Regiment.

I had the honour to report the substance of the above to your Excellency by telegraph to-day.

I have, &c.
(Signed) R. W. GRAVES

No. 236.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received December* 20.)

(No. 828. Confidential.)
Constantinople, December 16, 1897.

My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Sivas, describing his recent visit to Zekki Pasha at Erzingian.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 236.

Vice-Consul Maunsell to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 1. Confidential.)
Sivas, December 7, 1897.

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to report that according to your Excellency's instructions I have proceeded to my post by way of Erzeroum and Erzingian, and visited the Mushir, Zekki Pasha, at the latter place.

During my four days' stay in Erzingian* I took opportunities of seeing not only the Mushir, but almost all the Pashas, and some of the junior officers of the 4th Army Corps there. I find that the Mushir is a comparatively young man, very energetic and active, and well qualified to take command in the field.

He is very determined and self-reliant, and will have nothing stand in the way of carrying out his wishes, but he is not a man likely to countenance or set on foot underhand intrigues against the supreme Government.

Ismaïl Bey, his Chief of the Staff, whom I had several opportunities of meeting, is an officer of considerable military capacity, constantly intriguing and entirely wanting in scruples of any kind.

He is in some ways a cleverer man than the Mushir, but could never rival him as a leader of men or Commander in the field.

He is a Cretan, and was, I believe, the officer in actual command of the troops sent to carry out the Sasun massacres.

He is the only officer in Erzingian who possesses the complete confidence of the Mushir. My principal interview with the Mushir lasted about an hour, and after his expressing his pleasure at seeing a Consul who was also a soldier, and with whom he could converse freely on military questions, I introduced the Kurdish question by asking his opinion of the Hamidié cavalry regiments.

He was not very enthusiastic as to their military value, but said they were progressing.

Their chief use in war time would be to supply the want of cavalry in the Turkish service, which was so greatly felt at the time of the last Russian war. He went on at once with a subject which was evidently uppermost in his mind, and which he explained to me at some length, viz., the importance to Turkey of defending the defile of Bitlis, which leads from the highlands round Lake Van into the Tigris basin. The great necessity of having a cavalry screen to act as the eyes of an army and prevent its capture by a Cossack raid, or such-like proceeding, was sufficiently obvious.

He continued for some time about the importance of this defile; the mountains stretched across the country from Erzeroum to Mush, and round the south shores of

* 24th to 28th November.

Lake Van like a curtain ("purda"), and the sole way through them passable for troops was by this Bitlis pass. If the Russians once captured such an opening, the whole of Mesopotamia would be at their mercy, and they would be free to advance either in the direction of Mosul or Diarbekir.

The importance of its defence was, therefore, supreme. The Russians, he remarked, were now very restless, and their agents had moved much about the country, mentioning in particular Mush, Erinj, and Kharput directions.

Above all, the railway to Kars was almost finished, and when completed there was no doubt but that its object was to assist in the invasion of Turkey.

Taking me to a large wall map, he demonstrated his remarks on it, pointing out the positions of Mush, Bitlis, &c., and ending his remarks by drawing his finger along the route from Alexandretta, through Diarbekir on Bitlis, placing it finally on Cyprus, laughed, but said nothing more.

I went on then to inquire why he permitted such depredations as were now being carried on by Kurds in various parts of the Van Vilayet, instancing specially his treatment of Hassan Pasha of Patnotz, and other events in that district.

Hassan Pasha, he owned, was a very bad man, but he was the chief representative of a very large tribe and a powerful family, and as such he found it necessary to retain him in his present position.

Any other leading man in the tribe whom he could think of to replace him would be just as bad.

However, Hassan Pasha was now on his way to Erzingian, and he would endeavour to make him improve his conduct. He then went on to explain that it was necessary to have the Kurds under direct military control, in order gradually to instruct them in military discipline, a quality in which they were at present somewhat deficient. This was, however, due to ignorance. The Civil Governors were not competent to train them to such a standard, which was purely military.

Ismaïl Bey subsequently explained the same to me at some length, saying that they intended dealing with the Kurds entirely by military law, instancing that at the present time there were three Kurdish prisoners from Van in the Erzingian prison.

I could not learn the names of these.

England, he said, always dealt with savage, ignorant races first by military law and then introduced civil control.

The difference between a strong Government like England and a weak one like his own, when dealing with such questions, did not seem apparent to him.

I explained that the results, so far, of this military control had not been successful.

I am convinced, therefore, that Zekki Pasha's intention is to pamper the Kurds as much as possible in order to make the Kurdish Hamidié organization as perfect as possible in view of war in the near future with Russia.

He is a very determined man, backed by strong Palace influence, and intends to carry through this policy regardless of all obstacles which the Civil Governors may place in his way, causing any of the latter to be removed who try to thwart him.

This policy is, in my opinion, entirely due to fear of an early advance over the frontier by Russia.

I do not think that there is any truth in the report that Zekki Pasha intends to set himself up as an independent Prince in Kurdistan, as he has neither the capacity nor the immediate following for such an enterprise.

I made careful inquiries at several points, but could find no confirmation of this rumour. The Kurds, although disaffected, would be far more likely to follow one of their own Chiefs than a Circassian, and a man whom they have known so long as representative of the Turkish Government.

Zekki Pasha will go to almost any lengths to form these Kurds into a useful force against Russia; and being extremely self-confident, thinks he is the only man capable of dealing with them, and has, I believe, informed the Sultan so.

He also spoke of an Armenian rebellion as an attempt by the Armenians to set up an independent Principality under a Prince ("Kral") of their own; but happily such attempts at rebellion were now almost subdued. The Armenians were principally merchants and useful as such, and by no means fitted for forming any State of their own, as they had not the necessary military qualifications. While in Erzeroum I heard that considerable military activity was in progress, and that it was intended to concentrate 20,000 men in the spring at Mush to act as a mobile force to defend the Bitlis pass, while the garrison of Erzeroum was to be strengthened to 18,000 to defend that fortress.

The winter season has set in this year very early and with abnormal severity, and I could find no actual movements of troops along the roads which I traversed which would tend to confirm the above. I met, however, parties of officers sent out from Erzingian into the various districts to check over the numbers and strength of the Reserve and Redif.

Stores from Erzingian had already arrived in Erzeroum before my departure, and these were being pushed on towards Mush at great inconvenience, owing to the weather, in impressed vehicles, with money requisitioned from the Vali, who was obliged to divert it from other necessary purposes.

The season now prevents any further movements of troops, but I am convinced, after my visit to Erzingian, that the Turks mean, in the spring, to take active measures against a probable Russian advance.

To concentrate troops at Mush and Erzeroum would be naturally the first steps to carry out these. I may add that two of the best general officers in the 4th Corps, and those most trusted by the Mushir, are now at Erzeroum and Bitlis, viz., Mehemet Ali Pasha at the former and Ali Pasha at the latter place. The actual garrison of Erzingian when I passed through was: four battalions of infantry, one regiment regular cavalry, and two regiments field artillery.

I have, &c.
(Signed) F. R. MAUNSELL.

No. 237.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received December* 21.)

(No. 688.)
(Telegraphic.) P. *Constantinople, December* 21, 1897, 5·10 P.M.

HER Majesty's Vice-Consul at Bitlis telegraphed yesterday as follows:—

"Sentence of imprisonment for various terms has been passed on seven of the Armenians imprisoned on political charges. The rest, to the number of forty-six, including the Protestant teachers Serkis and Nerses, have been acquitted and released."

No. 238.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received December* 27.)

(No. 829.)
My Lord, *Constantinople, December* 17, 1897.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 603 of the 7th September, I have the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul at Erzeroum, reporting that the three Kurdish Chiefs, Emin, Hussein, and Hadji Temer Pashas, have again been arrested and sent to Erzingian under escort.

I have since received a telegram from Mr. Graves, stating that they have been exiled by Iradé to Tripoli in Barbary, to the great satisfaction of all classes in Erzeroum.

I have, &c.
(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.

Inclosure in No. 238.

Consul Graves to Sir P. Currie.

(No. 46.)
Sir, *Erzeroum, December* 4, 1897.

WITH reference to my despatches No. 2 of the 7th January and No. 34 of the 27th August, I have the honour to report that the three Kurdish Chiefs, Emin, Hussein, and Hadji Temer Pashas, who had been allowed by Zekki Pasha to return to their homes at the time of the disturbances on the Persian frontier last summer, have again been sent to Erzingian under escort.

I learn that the Mushir is now much incensed against his former protégé, Emin

Pasha, who had addressed a telegram to the Sultan complaining that Zekki Pasha would not leave him in peace and was intriguing to make himself Prince of Kurdistan, and Emin is consequently said to be under close arrest at Erzingian.

I have, &c.

(Signed) R. W. GRAVES.

No. 239.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(*Received December* 27.)

(No. 837.)

Constantinople, December 23, 1897.

My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to report that I instructed Mr. Block to try and ascertain unofficially the cause of the arrest and exile of the three Kurdish Chiefs mentioned in my despatch No. 829 of the 17th instant.

The Sultan's First Secretary informed him that the step had been taken on account of the numerous complaints received at the Palace against the three individuals in question, but both the Grand Vizier and the Foreign Minister on being applied to, pleaded total ignorance of the matter, stating that far from knowing the reason of their punishment, they were not even aware of the fact that they were to be exiled.

I mention this incident as an illustration of the absolute control exercised by the Palace in such matters and of the powerlessness of the Porte to interfere with any functionary like Zekki Pasha, who receives his instructions directly from the Sultan.

I have, &c.

(Signed) PHILIP CURRIE.